ORDER! ORDER!:

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE PHRASEOLOGY OF QUESTION TIME IN THE AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND HOUSES OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Abstract

Question Time is a distinctive daily parliamentary routine. Its aim is to hold Ministers of the State accountable for the actions and decisions of the Government. However, in many Parliaments, including the New Zealand and Australian Federal Houses of Representatives, it is more of a theatrical performance where parties try their best to score political points.

As any performance, Question Time is governed by certain rules and regulations outlined in an official document Standing Orders. As there is not much action, Standing Orders mainly describe language norms and specify 'unparliamentary language'.

This research looks at and analyses the use of formulaic vocabulary used by MPs in the year preceding general elections in New Zealand and Australia. The formulaic language includes phrasal lexical items and formulae for asking / answering questions, for raising points of order and the Speakers' idiolectal phrasal vocabulary for quelling disorder in the Chambers and regulating the work of the House.

The framework developed for this research consisted of the following steps: an ethnographic study of Question Time as a communicative performance which included the development of a database containing all the empirical material; a

linguistic study of Question Time including genrelect study, parliamentary formulae study and disorder analysis before the elections.

As a result this research has shown that Question Time is a communicative performance event in New Zealand and Australia with significant cultural, historic and linguistic differences in spite of the common origins of the two Parliaments. It has identified 60 Question Time genre-specific phrasal lexical items that MPs use in the two Parliaments, studied their structure and meaning (where necessary). It has also looked at the strategies the MPs employ for creating disorder in the House, and the ways of quelling disorder by the Speakers of the two Parliaments.

List of abbreviations and acronyms

MP – Member of Parliament

PLI – Phrasal Lexical Item

FEI – Fixed Expressions including Idioms

Hon. – Honourable (usually Member) – a form of address in Parliament

Rt. Hon. – Right Honourable – a form of addressing Prime Minister in the New Zealand Parliament

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Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

1. Aims

This work is a linguistic and ethnographic investigation of a specialised linguistic situation governed by both tacit as well as formal conventions, the latter laid down in a rule book, termed Standing Orders. The situation is Question Time. The location is the debating chamber in two Houses of Representatives: those of the Australian Federal Parliament and the New Zealand Parliament.

1.1. Why examine Question Time?

Parliamentary Question Time is a distinctive ritual in the debating Chamber that takes place daily in the two Parliaments at a certain time. In fact it is the most attended part of Parliamentary routine by the Members, media and general public due to the element of a show in it. The original purpose of Question Time was to make the Ministers of the Government account for their work and "explain and defend the work, policy decisions and actions of their department" (*House of Commons Information Office: Parliamentary Questions Factsheet P1* 2003). Ryan (2009: 18) says, that "[i]t is the focal point in the parliamentary schedule where all MPs across the political, regional, and ideological spectrum meet to question the government. It is also generally viewed as the most

powerful tool the opposition has to ensure the executive is held accountable for its actions". However, these days Question Time has been partially turned into an arena where various parliamentary party members try to score political points.

As will be shown in the following chapters, both the New Zealand and the Australian Federal Parliaments have common origins but various developmental paths. Initially patterned in the Westminster tradition, the two Parliaments have developed their own form and by the end of the first decade of the 21st century have proved to have more differences than commonalities in the ways they work. The major modifications include:

- different political systems in the two countries. While the politics of New Zealand take place in a framework of a parliamentary representative democratic monarchy, it is a federal constitutional parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy in Australia.
- different parliamentary systems as a result of the two countries having different political systems. Australia has a federal system of government which means that powers are distributed between a national government (the Commonwealth) and the six States. The Constitution defines the boundaries of law-making powers between the Commonwealth and the States/Territories. New Zealand, by contrast, is a parliamentary

democracy and a constitutional monarchy. The only body which can make laws is the elected House of Representatives.

- different Parliament structures. The Australian Federal Parliament consists of the two Chambers – the Senate and the House of Representatives, while in New Zealand a unicameral parliament structure was adopted in 1950.
- differences in the ways Question Time sessions are run. While in the New Zealand Parliament the questions to the Ministers are submitted in writing and the Ministers have time to prepare the answers, in the Australian Chamber the questions of the Ministers are asked on the spot and they do not have any time to prepare the answers.

1.2. Exploration of genrelects in general and methodology for their study

"Parliaments are institutions which are dedicated to talk; members of parliament debate legislative proposals and scrutinise the work of governments through questioning; they may also be the sites where governments explain and justify their policies" (Bayley, 2004: 1). Thus, parliamentary talk is a sub-genre of political language and represents its most formal and institutionalised variety.

Different ways of doing things find their reflection in the language of parliamentary proceedings in the two Houses: "the particular institutional

design of each parliament and its political history and culture […] play a significant role in shaping the discourse produced therein" (Archakis & Tsakona, 2011: 66). Besides, as pointed out by Fenton-Smith (2008: 98), the discourse of Parliamentary Question Time is "worthy of study for the simple reason that the talk that goes on […] is always 'talk on behalf of' a wider populace. Assembly members, whether elected or not, speak *for us* and *about us*".

Bloch observed in (1975) that formal elaboration in political oratory goes hand-in-hand with the imposition of severe constraints on creativity, referential content and the range of interpretive options open to audiences; so MPs in both Parliaments use finite sets of particular expressions which differ from each other due to the differences outlined above. Some expressions appear more often than others in the speeches of MPs, some are more formal and have more restricted conditions of use than others.

A significant number of studies have been conducted lately in the field of parliamentary discourse. Those include the study of discourse structure of Parliamentary questions and answers (Fenton-Smith, 2008; Hazama, Gençkaya, & Gençkaya, 2007), politeness and impoliteness in parliamentary discourse (Harris, 2001), insults and arguments (Ilie, 2004), evasion techniques (Bavelas,

Black, Chovil, & Mullet, 1990; Rasiah, 2007a), parliamentary interruptions (Bevitori, 2004; Carbó, 1992), humour (Archakis & Tsakona, 2011; Mueller, 2011), argumentative strategies of persuasion in parliamentary discourse (Bayley, 2004; Ilie, 2010) and phraseology of parliamentary language (Elspass, 2002).

Many of the researches concentrate on European and North American Parliaments while the Australian and New Zealand Parliaments, and their Question Time in particular, have not been studied in depth. Thus, the present study is significant in a number of ways. It makes contributions to two different fields in which there have been limited studies undertaken so far. The first is the comparative ethnographic study of Question Time in the Australian and New Zealand Parliaments. The second is phraseology of parliamentary discourse, in the specific area of Question Time.

2. Analytic framework

Parliamentary Question Time as an ethnographic phenomenon has been approached using a framework of ethnography of speaking (Bloch, 1975; Hymes, 1973, 1974a; Saville-Troike, 1989). It is seen here as a ritual: "parliamentary discourse is ritualised and rule-bound; it is governed by tradition, rules and regulations, and new Members are required to respect them.

Naturally the rituals and rules observed change from nation to nation but they will all determine particular linguistic chores" (Bayley, 2004: 14).

Thus, the study of Question Time in the light of cross-cultural perspective by comparing the New Zealand and Australian Parliaments aims to reveal and describe linguistic and ethnographic differences in the development of parliamentary language and culture in the two countries: "[l]anguages, like other cultural traits, will be found to vary in the degree and nature of their integration into the societies and cultures in which they occur" (Hymes, 1974a: 18).

Within this approach the notions of 'community of practice' (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998; Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002) and 'discourse community' (Chambers, 1993; Cheshire, 2002; Swales, 1997) are also employed. The discourse community is seen as being in possession of and creating a set of genres with which the twin aims of Question Time are to be achieved.

Thus, parliamentary discourse is treated here as a genre, and this work focuses on the extraction and study of parliamentary phrasal lexical items (PLIs) because "[g]enres are associated with formulae" (Kuiper, 2009: ix). The formulae selected for this research are Question Time specific expressions

which regularly occur in the speeches of MPs and are characteristic of the genre.

2.1. Pre-elections

Chapter 7 investigates the effect of an upcoming election on disorderly behaviour in two Houses of Representatives: that of the Australian Federal Parliament and that of the New Zealand Parliament. Two hypotheses will be tested. The first hypothesis is that, notwithstanding their common origins in the Westminster parliamentary tradition, there are significant genrelectal differences in the way the two Houses respond to the impending election. The second hypothesis is that both will respond by becoming increasingly disorderly.

The locus for measuring disorderly conduct is taken from the Wednesday Parliamentary Question Time for the year 2007 in the case of Australia and 2008 in the case of New Zealand. All instances of disorderly conduct will be tracked and a month-by-month measure will be made of each kind of disorder as indicated by Standing Orders. All responses of the Speaker to disorder will also be logged.

The research shows what role a personality of a Speaker plays in regulating the work in the debating Chamber and in outlining the boundaries of acceptable behaviour and language use for MPs.

2.2. Reasons for the study

In order to understand the way in which Question Time operates linguistically, the study focuses on the linguistic performance of Members of Parliament as it is controlled by the conventions, both tacit and formal governing such performance. It focuses in particular on the way in which disorder is created and order is maintained. This is done by looking at the phraseology of Question Time as it is manifested in the formulaic vocabulary available to MPs and the Speakers of the two Houses and use of that vocabulary. The framing of this research is provided in Chapter 2.

3. Methods

The aim of this research is to study Parliamentary Question Time as a formulaic genre, i.e. to look at and compare the use of specialised formulae in the two Parliaments. This requires the extraction and in-depth linguistic and lexicographic investigation of pre-selected multi-word phrasal lexical items (PLIs) characteristic of parliamentary discourse.

PLIs (or restricted collocations) “are pairs of words which occur together in ways that are more restrictive than the grammar of the language requires” (Kuiper, 2004: 51). Thus, to undertake this study data was collected from the official Hansards of the Australian Federal and New Zealand Parliaments. Only Wednesday Question Time sessions for one year period were selected for this research.

The process of PLIs extraction and selection consisted of several steps and included the electronic extraction of quantitative data from a corpus, and the development and creation of a relational database containing all the empirical material, i.e. the Hansard transcripts (linguistic data) of all the Wednesday Question Time sessions for a year 2007 in the Australian Federal Parliament and 2008 for the New Zealand Parliament, and also the video records of those (ethnographic data). To the best of my knowledge this approach is unique as it offers an alternative way of organisation, storage and fast access to the empirical material.

The total data set was analysed ethnographically to provide understanding of the ways in which the linguistic behaviour of MPs arises within its non-linguistic context. This ethnography is contained in Chapters 4 and 5.

The linguistic data were also represented as a corpus and subjected to corpus analytic processes. These processes rely on the computer-assisted study of common language patterns occurring in the natural arrays of texts. Thus, the PLIs for the research were extracted from the corpus of Hansard texts using the corpus software WordSmith. The total number of PLIs extracted was 60. Interestingly, only parliament specific expressions had high enough frequencies of occurrence to be selected as research material. No everyday or less contextually specific expressions met the required statistical threshold. This fact proves the hypothesis that Question Time is a ritualised gathering with highly formal and genre-specific language.

The selected set of formulae was used for the analysis of genrelects and diachronic variation. The analyses of the selected PLIs showed that they basically fall under two main categories: Speaker's expressions and MPs' expressions. They are formulae related to the maintenance of order and set expressions for asking / answering parliamentary questions. They were further studied to determine their region-specific use (Australia vs. New Zealand), party specific use (e.g. National Party vs. Labour Party), gender (men vs. women), etc. In other words, a genrelect study was conducted (Kuiper, 2009). These two methodologies are discussed in Chapter 3.

4. Outcomes

The research conducted in this study will show that Parliamentary Question Time in Australia and New Zealand involves two competing aims: the overt and usually orderly business of asking questions of Ministers in order to hold the executive to account for its government, and the often covert and less orderly business of point scoring.

The two Houses selected for this study show that these two aims are present in both Houses but the way in which they lead to verbal performance is significantly different. These differences are subject to a number of linguistic and extra-linguistic factors. Those include, for example, the Speaker's personality since he / she sets the general atmosphere in the debating Chambers and boundaries for acceptable behaviour and vocabulary use, and approaching general elections when the Members of Parliaments become verbally more aggressive towards their political opponents.

Chapter 6 will discuss the genrelects of both Houses. It will show how disorderly conduct is created and controlled linguistically in the two Houses. It will provide an examination of formulaic vocabulary of those Members who are most involved in Question Time, and the linguistic techniques they use in the House.

Chapter 7 constitutes a comparative diachronic study of disorder in both Houses leading up a general election. By focusing on a year in which there was a general election it will be shown that the impending election leads to increasing disorder in both Houses but again with significant differences. The impact of the approaching election is the subject of Chapter 7.

Chapter 8 will outline the findings of the study and discuss their significance for an understanding of the discourse community of MPs, and what it has to tell of relevance of the concepts of discourse community and community of practice as well as the study of the phraseology of genrelects.

The current chapter has provided a short overview of the thesis in terms of its organisation and contents. It has also discussed in brief a perceived significance of this study, the novelty of approaches used to conduct it, and also its potential to contribute to a number of fields, including the studies of parliamentary discourse and the ethnography of Parliamentary Question Time. The following chapter will look at the theoretical background for the study of phraseology of Question Time.

Chapter 2: PHRASEOLOGY OF QUESTION TIME

1. Introduction

This chapter will look at the theoretical background of genre studies and different approaches to this phenomenon. It will discuss the potential for such notions as 'speech community', 'community of practice' and 'discourse community' to accommodate Parliamentary Question Time. Parliamentary discourse will be treated here as a sub-genre of political discourse, and Question Time – as a particular discourse situation governed by inner rules and conventions with strict language restrictions.

2. Speech genres

"The English language", in Crystal and Davy's opinion (1974: 3), "is not a simple homogeneous phenomenon […] but rather a complex of many 'varieties' of language in use in all kinds of situations in many parts of the world". The speakers of a language intuitively acquire or develop in course of their socialisation the awareness of different speech varieties within a language because various areas of human activity require different types of speech to be used. For example, when uttering a sentence a person not only selects appropriate lexical, phonological and grammatical patterns but also takes into account the social environment. Thus, a particular social situation would require

from a speaker the use of an appropriate variety of language. “Each sphere in which language is used develops its own relatively stable types of […] utterances” which Bakhtin (1986: 60) terms “speech genres”.

Kuiper (2009: ix) believes, that “native speakers acquire many genres as a result of acquiring social roles”. “A social role […] is an enactment of rights and duties attached to a given status. […] It will involve one or more parts and each of these different parts may be presented by a performer on a series of occasions to the same kinds of audience or to an audiences of the same kind” (Goffman, 1980: 27). By acquiring a social role a person commits themselves to playing a part which is often governed by strict social rules which require a person to have “a sharpened consciousness of the form and function of language, its place in society, its power” (Crystal & Davy, 1974: 5).

3. Speech community, community of practice, discourse community

Chilton & Schäffner (2002: 20) say, that “genres are a function of meta-discursive activities of social actors. Participants in a linguistic interaction conceive of the interaction as being of a certain kind, as proceeding according to certain patterns of linguistic interaction that they have conceptualized in memory, and in which they may be more or less skilled. The conceptualization and its deployment in the ongoing activity defines that activity: there is no genre

form independent of the participants". Thus, it is appropriate to say, that if a person shares particular social and language norms and conventions with other people, he / she belongs to a speech community. Hymes (1974a: 51) defines a speech community as "a community sharing knowledge of rules for the conduct and interpretation of speech. Such sharing comprises knowledge of at least one form of speech, and knowledge also of its patterns of use. Both conditions are necessary".

Although the notion of a speech community is not new in linguistic research and has been widely explored by scholars (Ervin-Tripp, 1964; Gumperz, 1964; Hymes, 1962), it appears to be too broad to describe parliamentary language practice: "[a socially defined] universe is the speech community: any human aggregate characterized by regular and frequent interaction by means of a shared body of verbal signs and set off from similar aggregates by significant differences in language use", the main difference in Gumperz's opinion (2009: 66) being grammar: "The verbal behavior of such groups always constitutes a system. It must be based on finite sets of grammatical rules that underlie the production of well-formed sentences, or else messages will not be intelligible". However, as shown in (Kuiper, 2009), it is specific formulae that tend to make up the bulk of vocabulary that a person uses in different social situations, and the acquisition of formulaic vocabulary requires "strictly linguistic knowledge in terms of phonology, syntax, and semantics of a lexicalised phrase, with

knowledge of conditions of its use – that is, its pragmatics and performance requirements. Such vocabulary is socially integrated in that its use is a function, both productively and perceptually, of social events that recur, such as the requirement under certain situations to apologise, thank someone, launch a ship, and crown kings and queens" (Kuiper, 2006: 291).

People acquire the knowledge of formulaic vocabulary in course of their lives. Mastery of the formulaic lexicon in terms of both its acquisition and its employment takes years to develop (Kuiper, 2006, 2009). Wenger et al. describe this process within the notion of 'communities of practice' – groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998; Wenger et al., 2002). These authors see communities of practice as learning communities in particular where new members go through a process of 'legitimate peripheral participation' before becoming experienced members of their community of practice. In their work Lave and Wenger (1991) talk about developmental cycles such learning entails and its important relationship to identity / membership, and the ways in which changing knowledge, skills and discourse are part of developing one's identity as a full legitimate participant. Wenger (1998: 47) explains, that "practice connotes doing, but not just doing in and of

itself. It is doing in a historical and social context that gives structure and meaning to what we do".

Parliament can certainly be viewed as a community of practice where MPs get involved into 'situated learning'. In fact, even the disposition of seats in the debating Chamber shows that the key players are concentrated in the centre whereas the newer Members occupy peripheral back benches. The statistical analysis (see the statistics on each Member's participation in the House in table "MPs" of the database) shows that newer Members are less involved in debates partially because each MP needs to act according to existing rules outlined in Standing Orders, and by standing by and giving themselves some time to see how each working day is organised and watching other MPs applying Standing Orders, newer members gradually get involved in the work of the Parliament by means of legitimate peripheral participation.

However, as shown in the following chapters, during Question Time Government party backbenches are often given tasks of asking questions of Ministers which will show the work of the Government in a favourable way. Lave and Wenger (1991: 53) say, that "[a]ctivities, tasks, functions, and understandings do not exist in isolation; they are part of broader systems of relations in which they have meaning. These systems of relations arise out of and are reproduced and developed within social communities, which are in part

systems of relations among persons. The person is defined by as well as defines these relations".

While getting involved in situated learning, a member of a community of practice also acquires a knowledge of specific vocabulary: "[l]anguage is part of practice, and it is in practice that people learn" (Lave & Wenger, 1991: 85). "Only in and through language can one issue commands, ask questions, make offers and promises. And only through language tied into social and political institutions can one declare war, declare guilty or not guilty, prorogue parliaments, or indeed raise or lower taxes" (Chilton & Schäffner, 2002: 9).

Parliament as a community of practice has the following functions: it "makes laws and holds the Government to account for its policies, actions, and spending" ("How Parliament Works: Role of Parliament," 2013). Most of these are achieved by means of oral or written communication between the Members of Parliament in course of parliamentary debates, committee meetings, correspondence with electorate members, etc. In order to maintain the formal character of parliamentary sittings of Parliament and achieve better outcomes certain behavioural and language norms have been developed in course of history. Those are of utmost importance because they help to maintain order in the Chamber and keep MPs on track. Thus, only certain language is permitted for use in the debating Chamber.

As this study focuses on parliamentary discourse, it is worthwhile treating Parliament and its Members as a ‘discourse community’ which can be defined as “a group of people with sufficiently common interests to use a vocabulary of words and concepts, whose meanings are accepted and whose definitions are assumed, that are brought to bear on the subjects of the discourse” (Little, Jordens, & Sayers, 2003: 74). Swales (1990) offers six criteria for defining a discourse community: “(a) common goals, (b) participatory mechanisms, (c) information exchange, (d) community-specific genres, (e) a highly specialised terminology, (f) a high general level of expertise”. Thus, to be a part of a discourse community one needs to comply with Swales’ six criteria.

Parliament is such a discourse community. It has common aims and objectives: professional codes of practice, procedural expertise, etc. It has means of communication among members: emails, letters, and phone calls. It has participatory mechanisms: sittings of the Parliament, committees meetings, electorate meetings, reports. It has community-specific genres: specific parliamentary language norms. It has specialist vocabulary as will be shown in Chapters 6 and 7 of this work. It is a nationally and internationally-recognised legal department with a long history.

Parliamentary specific language is of interest for this research. It is specialised vocabulary used by a limited group of speakers belonging to the particular

discourse community. In Bakhtin's view (1981: 259-300), discourse communities try to create a 'monoglossic' way of speaking, in which words are fixed in their meanings and limited in their uses. Thus, specialised vocabulary is one of the most important criteria for a discourse community. In (1979: 1) Hudson emphasises its significance by saying: "If one wished to kill a profession, to remove its cohesion and its strength, the most effective way would be to forbid the use of its characteristic language". This brings us to the notion of genres which are "the media through which members of professional or academic communities communicate with each other" (Bhatia, 2001: 65).

Social and technological progress, new economic and cultural links between countries lead to the development of speech genres. As Bakhtin (1986: 60) states, "the wealth and diversity of speech genres are boundless because the various possibilities of human activity are inexhaustible, and because each sphere of activity contains an entire repertoire of speech genres that differentiate and grow as the particular sphere develops and becomes more complex". Therefore, it is hardly possible to say, that once they have emerged, genres remain unchanged: "as historical and cultural products, communicative genres are […] open to change and cultural variation (Guenther & Knoblauch, 1995: 6).

Parliamentary discourse can be treated as a sub-genre of political discourse due to its specific linguistic features that allow for it to be differentiated from other discourse types. As Bayley (2004: 13) points out, this distinctiveness is achieved by "particular combinations of certain features involving various levels of linguistic and discursive analysis". Among the most prominent features he names are unique turn-taking procedures and address forms. He reasons that most people listening to a recording of parliamentary debates would be able to identify it as a parliamentary talk.

The work of Parliament and the conduct of MPs are characterised by a particular discourse situation. Parliament is a social formation where a limited number of participants follow the same rules and routines every day. As Elspass (2002: 84) notices, although MPs are the main participants of this formation, they do not speak solely to the assembly of parliamentary delegates, but also to other people who are present in the House, such as journalists, members of the public, and viewers and listeners at home, who receive the television or radio broadcasts. Besides, "a representative giving a speech in parliament speaks as an individual and thus expresses his or her personal political beliefs in a unique way and in a unique context. At the same time, the person speaks as a member of Parliament or Congress, as a member of a party and as a representative of a constituency, thus possibly 'doing' opposition against another party or against the government, and expressing the attitudes and ideologies of the own group.

[…] By doing so he or she is enacting a system of parliamentary democracy, reproducing the discourse order of democracy and democratic ideologies, and presupposing a historically variable Common Ground of cultural knowledge, norms and values, shared by all other groups of the same culture" (van Dijk, 2002: 204).

Archakis and Tsakona (2011: 66) believe, that "institutional discursive features and ritualised forms of interaction in the Parliament (e.g. address forms, politeness norms, turn-taking procedures) are important in the setting, where parliamentarians are expected to express, negotiate, and justify their political positions and policies, as well as evaluate, attack, and delegitimise those of the opponent". Thus, Parliamentary Question Time, which is the main focus of this research, is a highly structured institutional and political speech event where only particular topics can be discussed using a certain variety of language. Failure to follow the procedure or to use the appropriate language leads to punishments.

Kuiper (Forthcoming: 11) says, that "[g]enres exist at the intersection of two sets of factors. The first are socio-cultural. […] They include matters such as who the prototypical producers and receivers of the genre are, its cultural location and its purpose". These factors will be looked at in Chapters 4 and 5 of the thesis.

The second set of factors that Kuiper names are the textual properties of the genre. The limitations on the lexical means allowed for use in the House lead to the emergence of specific set expressions and figures of speech peculiar to the parliamentary speech genre. Those will be termed as phrasal lexical items (PLIs) – syntactically complex lexical units having certain linguistic conditions of use (Kuiper, 2009: 5-6). The non-linguistic conditions of use do not apply to all PLIs as, along with phrasal lexical items restricted to parliamentary discourse, there are many stylistically neutral phrases and expressions used in the Parliament. Those PLIs that have non-linguistic restrictions will be termed formulae (Kuiper, 2009: 6). Wray (2002: 83) underlines the importance of formulae by saying, that "formulaic sequences […] contribute to the establishment and maintenance of an appropriate style for a particular genre". For this research the total of 60 PLIs were selected from the Parliamentary Question Time corpus. They were divided into two main groups according to the Question Time participants, the Speaker of the House and MPs (as it will be described in Chapter 6 and 7).

4. Summary of Chapter 2

In this chapter the relevant literature has been surveyed to provide an account of previous work relevant to an understanding of formulaic genres and parliamentary discourse. This provides the necessary background to the

substantive chapters which constitute the contribution of this thesis to our understanding of Parliamentary Question Time as a genre. In the following chapter I will look at methodologies to conduct such a study.

Chapter 3: METHODOLOGY

1. Introduction

The present chapter discusses and explains a framework for the analysis of phraseology of Question Time. The framework combines several approaches discussed below which make it new and unique. The approaches include a corpus-based study of phraseological units used by Members of Parliament at Question Time, which were extracted using a corpus software tools. They were further stored in a purpose-created database which, in my opinion, is the best way to collect, store and access ethnographic data. The study material stored in the database includes the Hansard records and video clips of the Question Time sessions in the two Parliaments, and also demographic and parliament-related information about MP's. All these data will be used to provide the ethnographic description of Question Time.

The use of the database also provides a quick access to MPs' utterances, thus enabling me to study the linguistic features of parliamentary discourse by means of describing the most frequent formula structures used in the two Parliaments. Quick database search provides real examples and context for the use of the formulae, and also the statistical data on the use of a particular expression by different Parliament / party/ gender/ etc. representatives. All these features will

help me later on to come up to the description of the Question Time genre and genderlects.

2. Developing a database for the study of the phraseology and ethnography of Parliamentary Question Time

The last few decades have shown a rapid growth and development in the sphere of computer technologies. Professionals from all sectors of life have learnt to integrate IT into their everyday activities, work and research. This integration helps to simplify many tasks and make data analysis easier, faster and more accurate.

The technological progress has become a stimulus for the development of software to satisfy people's various needs. Lawler and Dry (1998) believe, that linguistics has benefitted more than other disciplines from the technological progress: "The relations between computing and linguistics are in fact deeper and more interesting than mere technological change might suggest" because "in the last decade computers have dramatically changed the professional life of the ordinary working linguist, altering the things we can do, the ways we can do them, and even the ways we can think about them" (Lawler & Dry, 1998: 1). Although the analysis of huge bodies of texts 'by hand' is possible, in Kennedy's opinion (1998), it is prone to error and not always exhaustive or

easily replicable. “Instead of using index cards and dictionary ‘slips’, lexicographers and grammarians [...] use computers to store huge amounts of text and retrieve particular words, phrases or whole chunks of text in context, quickly and exhaustively, on their screens” (Kennedy, 1998: 5).

Various linguistic research projects require different approaches. Thus, an impressive number of software applications are created every day to accelerate the research: “they can facilitate our individual research and teaching, allowing us to gather information more quickly, analyze large bodies of data more efficiently, and reach a more varied group of students through individualized teaching programs. At the same time, they are reshaping the discipline, bringing to light new areas of research, new types of data, and new analytical tools” (Lawler & Dry, 1998: 2). Those programmes range from simple spelling and grammar checking tools and transcription fonts to machine translation software and corpus analysis tools.

Relational databases are widely used in business and web development: “You would use a relational database for boring applications such as inventory, accounting, or implementing a shopping cart system for a commercial web site” (West, 2008: 44). However, recently database applications’ usage has increased due to the simplified development and fast and easy-to-use interface. Normally a database would have multiple tables, cross-indexed with each other. This

helps to avoid data entry duplication and allows access to information in other tables more quickly. In this relation Dees (2002: 14) compares databases with self-sorting files where each record (card) contains any number of information items (fields), and the user can sort the cards on any information item or combination of items(s)he chooses. This feature makes relational database software a valuable tool in research projects that require analysis, systematization of large arrays of empirical material and easy and quick access to the data.

The present research project investigates parliamentary discourse and aims to compare linguistic and ethnographic features of Question Time in the New Zealand and Australian Parliaments. To achieve this goal it is necessary to collect, process and analyze the following data:

- Demographic and parliament-related information about the Members of the two Parliaments. This will make it possible to conduct the ethnographic study of the Question Time ritual and the role that each MP plays in it. For instance, those MPs who have been in the Parliament for a while might behave and talk differently from first-term MPs. Also, middle-aged male Labour Party MPs' performance might be somewhat different from young female Green Party MPs, etc.

- Hansard transcripts of the Question Time sessions in the two Parliaments and video recordings of those. These two types of media were obtained from the Parliaments' websites and are necessary for both the ethnographic and linguistic parts of the research because "to understand what is happening in the field one must become a participant observer. To know which are formulae in a tradition one must also become a (perhaps partial) native of the tradition oneself" (Kuiper, 2004: 40). Hansard records only cannot be used as they get amended by the Hansard clerks and in order to comply with Standing Orders or by or MPs themselves after the actual sessions if they believe the Hansard does not report what they actually said. Besides, Hansard records do not contain all the MPs' utterances. A large number of transition utterances are omitted in the Hansard but they are very important for the linguistic part of the research as most of them are phrasal lexical items (e.g. *Are there any more supplementary questions? No. We move to question number…*) – the object of this research. Video materials, on the other hand, contain word-by-word record of what MPs say. Mueller (2011: 36-37) while investigating humour in the German Parliament, faced a similar problem: "A comparison between the audio-visual recordings of speeches and the transcribed protocols reveals that stenographers suppress recurring discourse markers […]. Furthermore, for the sake of readability,

stenographers may slightly rearrange the order of the interjections […]". Thus, video recordings provide an opportunity to watch Question Time participants' interaction with each other, their gestures, movements, facial expressions, and hear their tone of voice – an invaluable source of information for the ethnographic part of the research – without the necessity of spending hours in the public gallery in the Parliament. Moreover, technology makes it possible to replay the most important bits – something totally impossible when watching the Parliamentary debates live.

- MPs' individual utterances. Besides the Hansard records as whole documents it is important to have individual utterances of MPs. This is necessary for statistical purposes to determine which political parties and MPs were more active during the Question Time sessions, and also for the genre study to see whether I can find differences in the Australian vs. New Zealand MPs' talk, men vs. women, different parties' MPs, etc.
- The list of Phrasal Lexical Items. The linguistic part of this research aims to reveal parliament-related formulaic expressions, describe their meanings and the sphere of usage.

In my opinion, all the types of data described above can be best processed if presented in a form of a database. Thus, for the first part of this research I used

the database software FileMaker Pro 10 with the purpose of systematization of the empirical material so that it was easily and quickly accessible. Struik et al. (1991: 280) believe, that "[a]s compared to traditional data acquisition, computer-aided database management gives more information in less time, and while it may not speed up research, it certainly assists with the use of an ever increasing amount of information". This new approach to linguistic data organisation proved to be useful as will be shown below.

The database that was created for this research consists of a number of interconnected tables. Fields in the tables handle various data types, e.g. text, video, statistical and numerical data, images, etc. Some bits of information may be relevant for several tables. However, due to the fact that FileMaker Pro 10 is relational database software there was no need to enter such data twice. The links between the tables allow such fields to 'borrow' data from other tables automatically. For example, the first table is called "MPs" and it lists all the MPs in the alphabetical order. The information can be presented either as a spreadsheet with all the records visible when scrolling the page down (Figure 1) or as a more user-friendly one record per page form view (Figure 2).

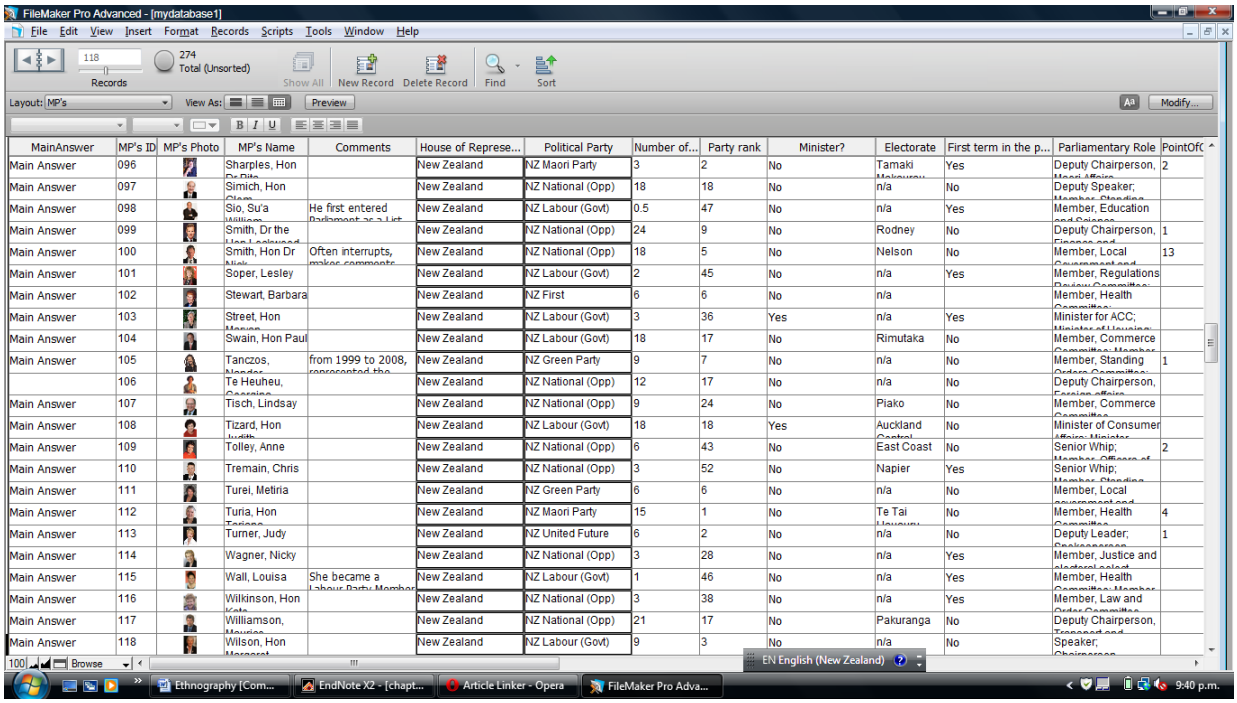


Figure 1: Spreadsheet mode of data presentation in the database.

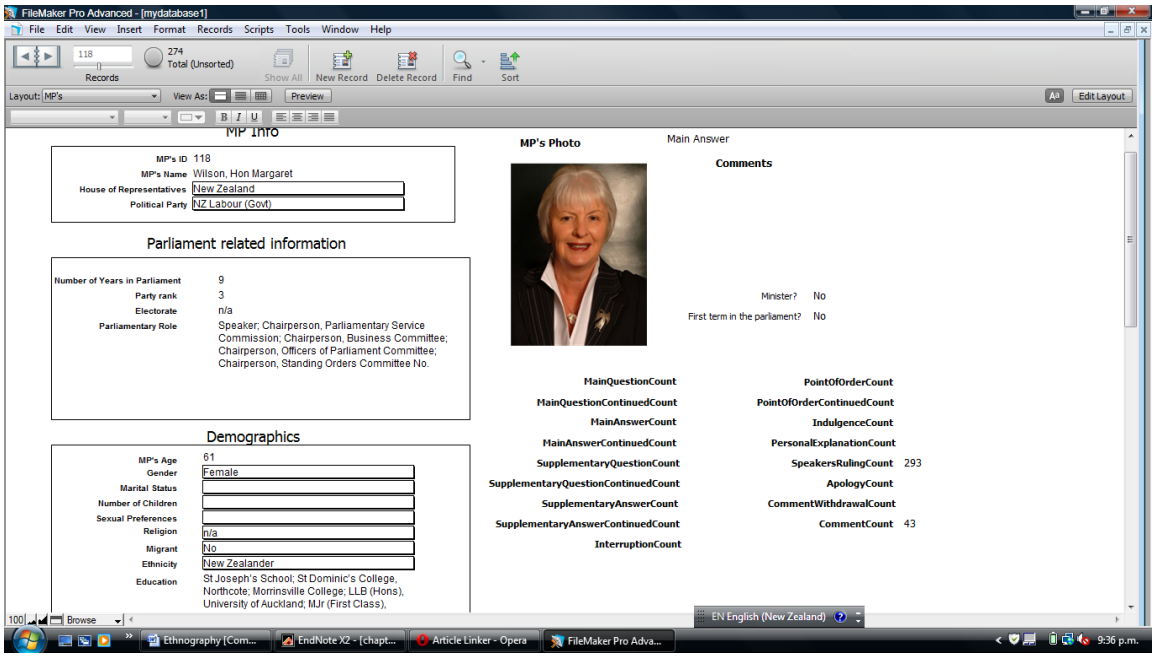


Figure 2: Form mode of data presentation in the database.

This table contains demographic facts (name, gender, age, marital status, number of children, sexual preferences, religious views, ethnicity, education and hobbies) and parliament-related information about the MPs (number of

years in the Parliament, party rank, electorate and MP's parliamentary role). The values for these fields are more or less standard and they are stored as dropdown lists for faster data entry and to avoid inconsistencies and typing errors (Figure 3).

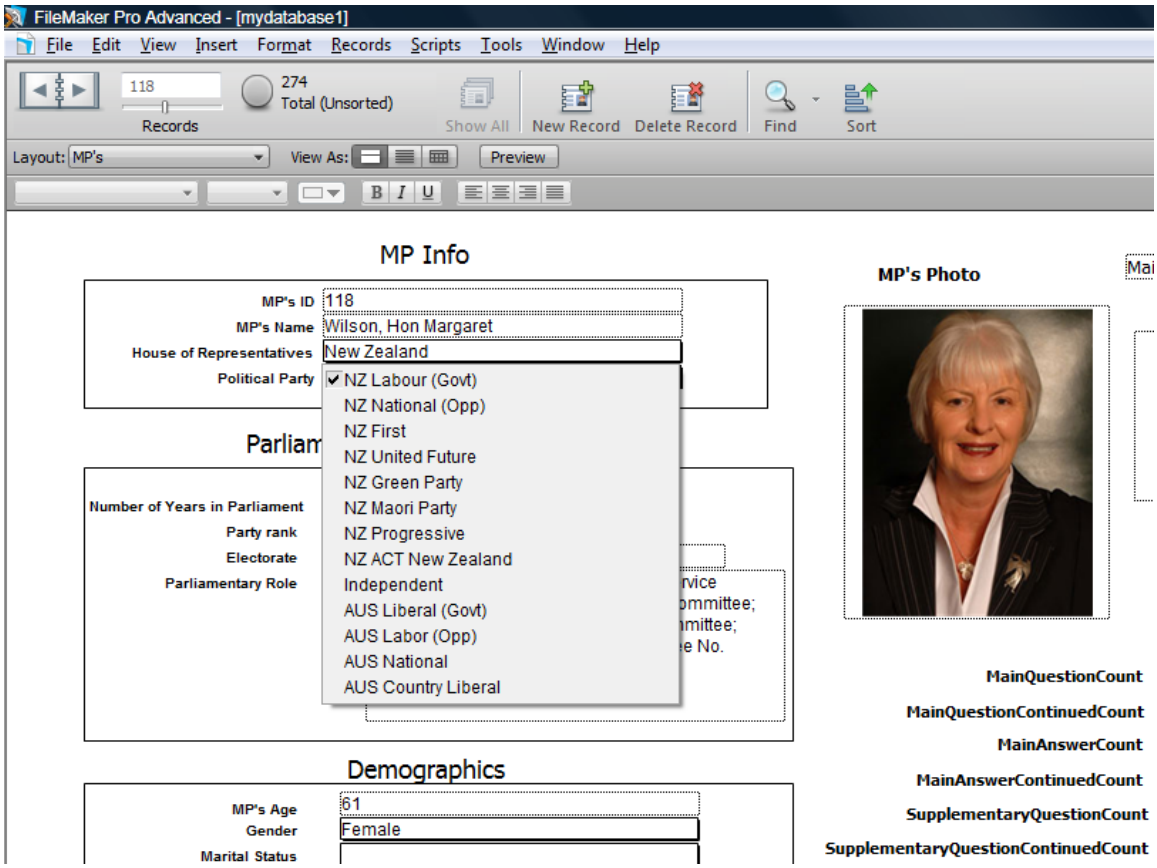


Figure 3: A dropdown list of parameters.

MP's ID field is filled up automatically when a new entry is added.

The left-hand side of the screen contains the statistical information about the number of utterances of different types uttered by the MP. These fields are also automatically filled on the basis of information collected from other tables (Figure 4).

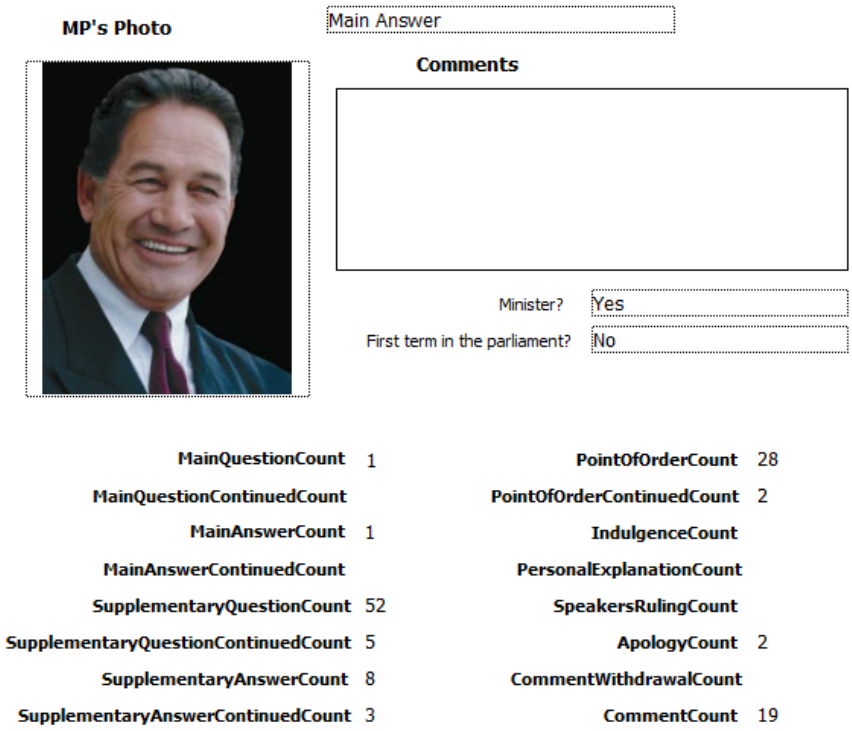


Figure 4: Automatically filled statistical fields.

The data stored in the table ‘MPs’ is used in other tables of the database. Besides, it is important for the ethnographic analysis of Question Time and for statistical purposes. These factors are research and comparison criteria that will help to determine if there are any differences in the way the politicians from different political parties, social and cultural backgrounds and gender express their ideas in the Parliament and reach their political goals.

The second table “Questions” contains full Hansard texts and video clips of each question asked and answered on Wednesday sessions in the New Zealand and Australian Parliaments for a year leading to general elections in those

countries, i.e. 2007 in New Zealand and 2008 in Australia (Figure 5). The easiest way to spot the differences between the Hansard transcripts and the actual sayings of MPs is to watch video clips which are integrated into one of the field on the same page.

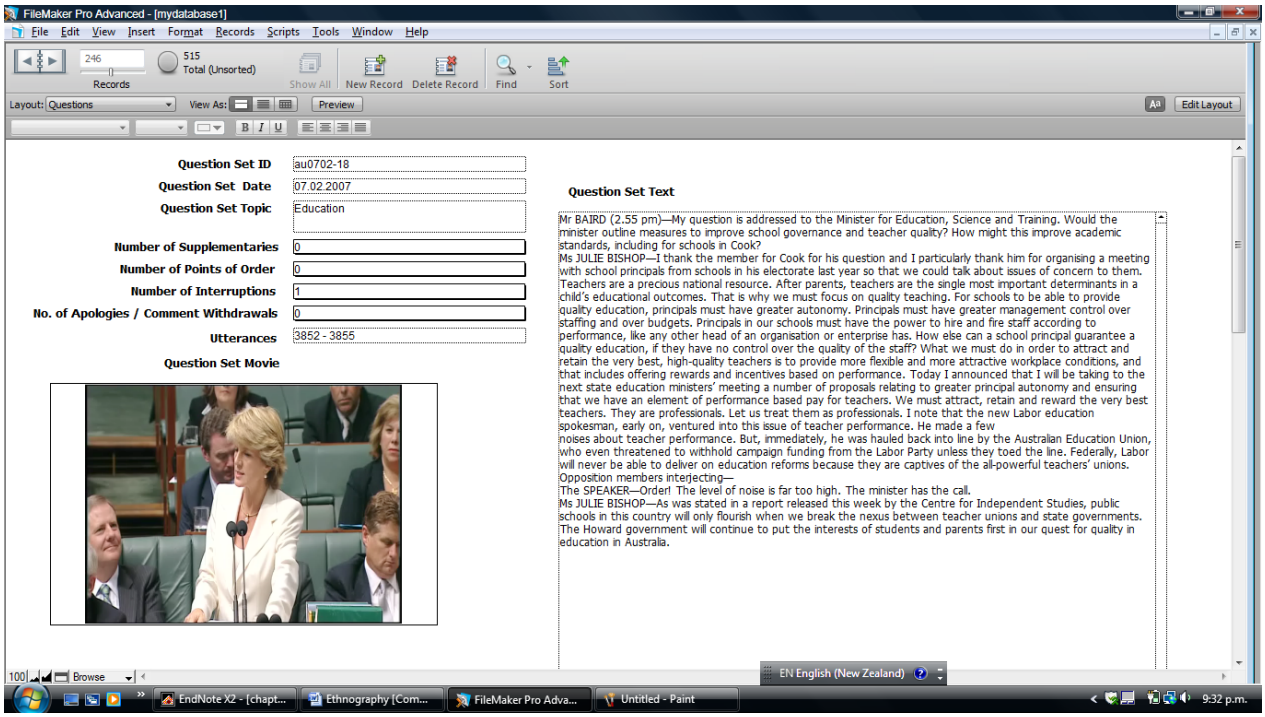


Figure 5: The layout of the "Questions" table.

In the top-left corner there are the following reference fields: Question Set Topic, Question Set Date and Question Set ID. Nuemann et al. (2007: 70) believe, that it is of utmost importance that the annotation possibilities be carefully considered if one wishes to create example corpora that are comprehensive and usable in the long term because "using a well-defined set of labels allows clear categorization of the data and future identification and

retrieval via the labels”. Thus, Question Set ID contains the information about the Parliament where the question was asked, date and the question number.

Among other fields there are drop-down lists fields with statistical data on the number of supplementary questions, points of order, interruptions and apologies and/or comment withdrawals. Those are important for the estimation of the emotional intensity in the House during the pre-election period.

The next table is named “Utterances” as it contains individual records of MPs’ utterances (Figure 6). Every utterance here has a unique ID which is automatically inserted when a new record is created. Utterance type field is a drop-down list of the following values: *Utterance ID, Utterance Type, Number of words in the utterance* (which is calculated automatically), *Utterance Text* and a short note about the person who uttered it. All the fields to the right of the photo (including the photo) are filled automatically when the name is entered. The information is borrowed from the table MPs.

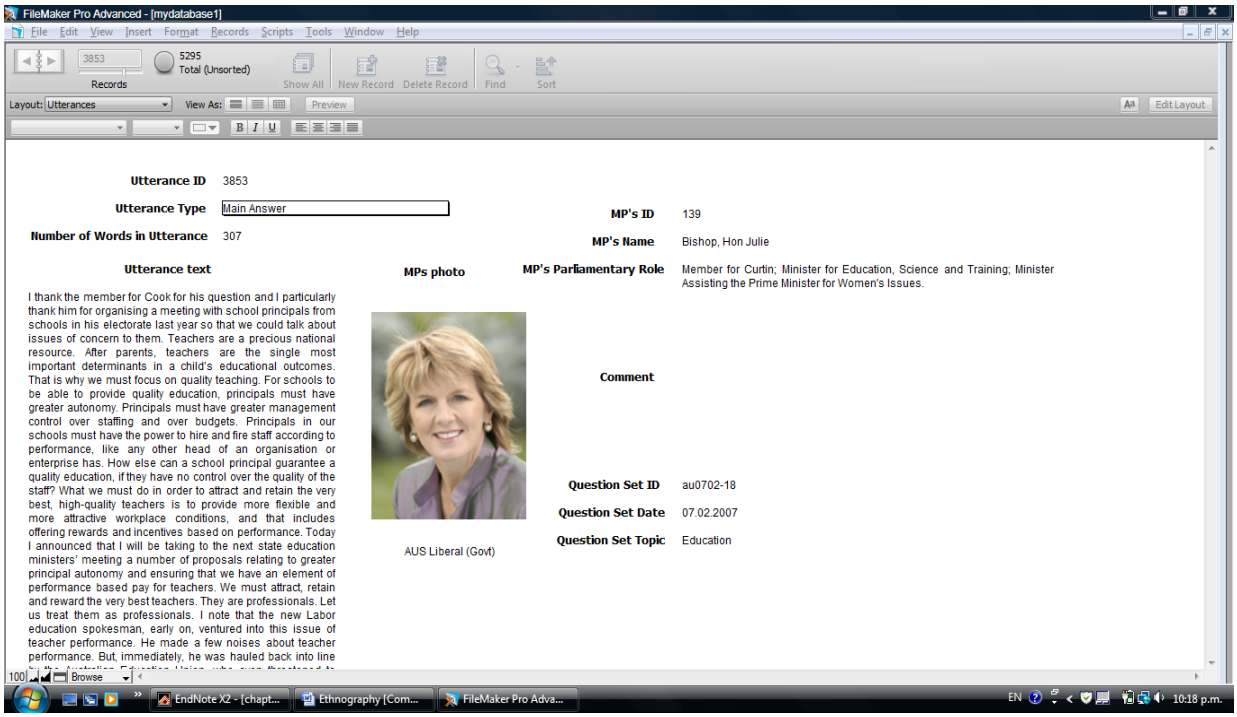


Figure 6: The layout of the "Utterances" table.

The table "Utterances" repeats the table "Questions" to some extent but it is necessary to have it for statistical purposes. It allows one to see how active MPs are during the Question Time sessions, to determine what types of utterances they tend to make more often, how long those utterances are, etc.

In fact, this table is important for the research as it contains all the data for the linguistic and ethnographic analyses. FileMaker Pro 10 allows multi-parameter search that sorts the entries and select those that match the criteria. For example, if the search criteria are: all the entries that are 100 words or longer in the category Points of Order, containing the phrasal lexical item '*raise a point of*

order', uttered by New Zealand MPs (Figure 7a), the computer will find fourteen entries matching the criteria (Figure 7b).

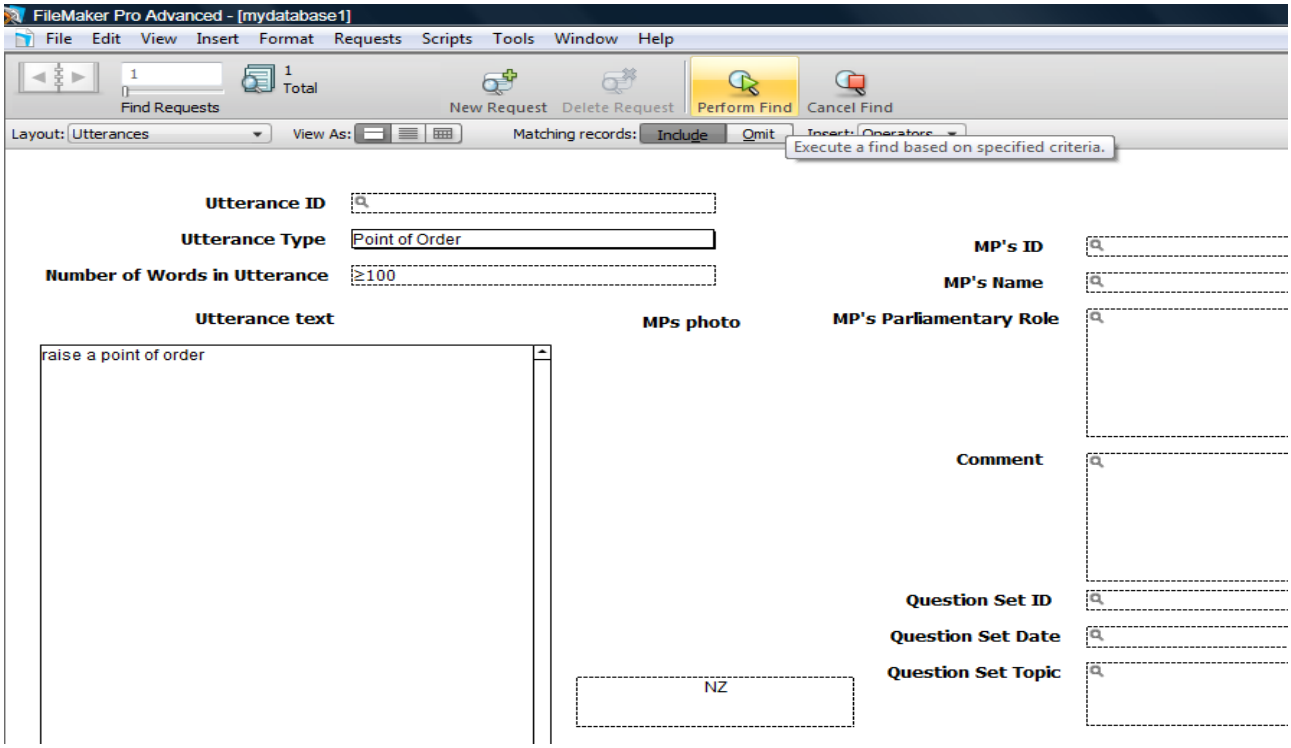


Figure 7a: Entering the search criteria.

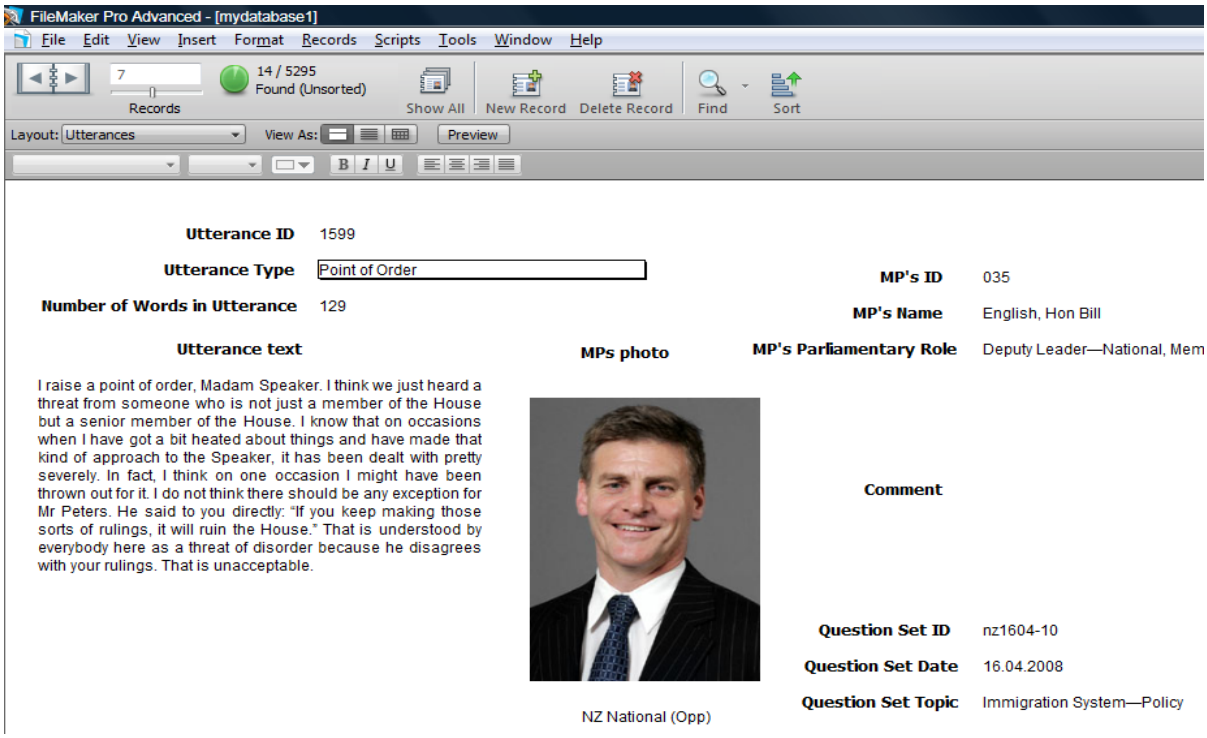


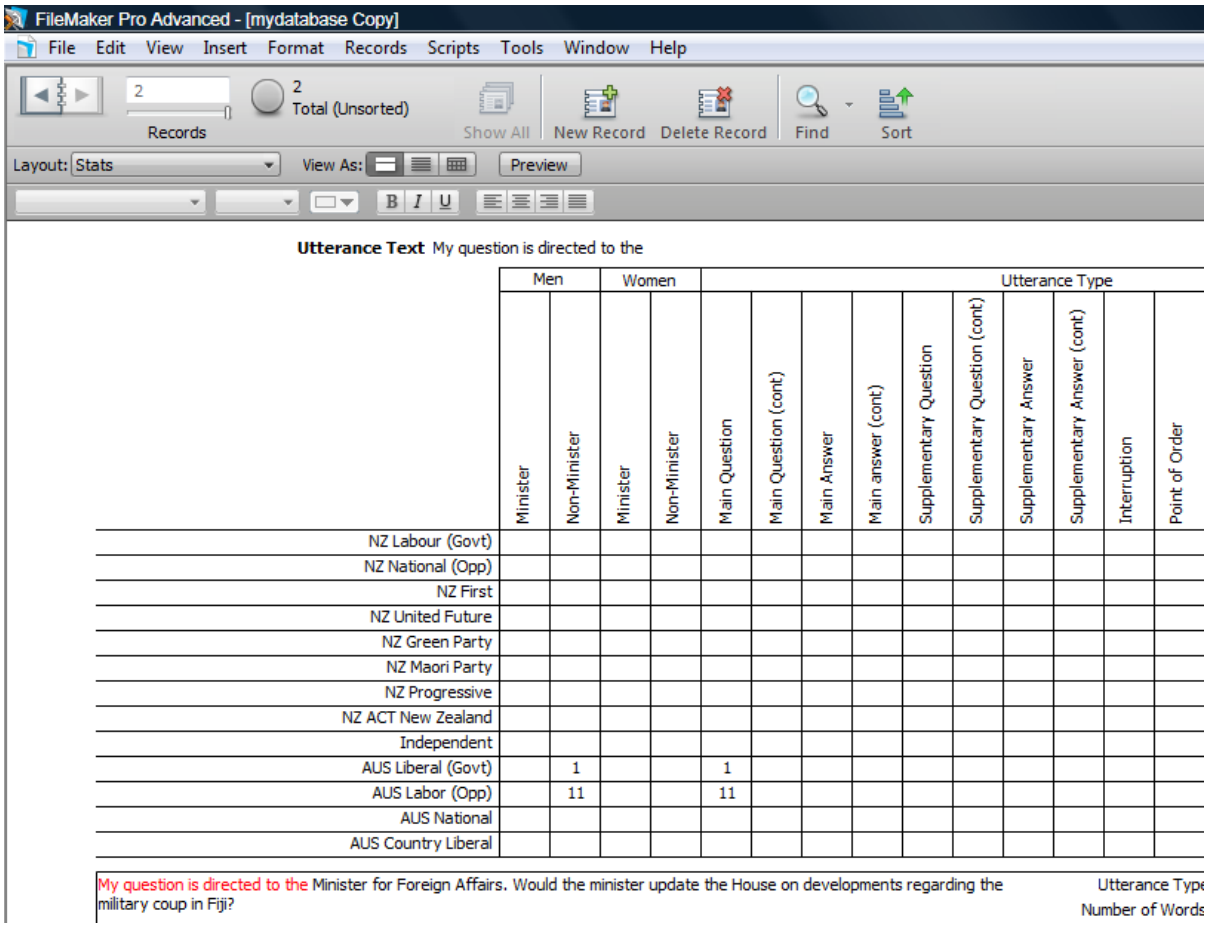
Figure 7b: Search results.

The fourth table of the database contains the ethnographic notes which I made while entering the data.

The layout of the "UtterancesFind" table is the exact copy of the "Utterances" table. The fields are not filled, however, because all of them can be used for setting search criteria. There are two buttons at the bottom of the page: "Find and Show Stats" and "Exit". The search engine works in the following way. If one wants to look for the phrasal lexeme "*My question is directed to the NP*" (where NP stands for any Nominal Predicate that can possibly be used in this PLI) than they will only be searching for the invariable components of this PLI in the database, namely the part '*My question is directed to the'*. If they look at the "Stats" table now they will see a spreadsheet containing the statistics on this particular expression and a list of utterances where it is used (Figure 8), which is necessary for the lexicographic description of PLIs.

The "Stats" table contains two fields: a table with the statistical data on a particular PLI and examples of all instances of its use occurring in the corpus. The table on Figure 8 has three large horizontal subsections: Men, Women and Utterance Type. The list of political parties is in the vertical subsection. As the example on Figure 8 shows, there were twelve occurrences of the expression "*My question is directed to the*" in the corpus, all uttered by male Australian MPs. Eleven out of twelve questions were from the Opposition MPs who have

been in the Parliament for more than one term, whereas one utterance came from a first-term Government MP. All the PLI were found in Main questions.



	Men		Women		Utterance Type									
	Minister	Non-Minister	Minister	Non-Minister	Main Question	Main Question (cont)	Main Answer	Main answer (cont)	Supplementary Question	Supplementary Question (cont)	Supplementary Answer	Supplementary Answer (cont)	Interruption	Point of Order
NZ Labour (Govt)														
NZ National (Opp)														
NZ First														
NZ United Future														
NZ Green Party														
NZ Maori Party														
NZ Progressive														
NZ ACT New Zealand														
Independent														
AUS Liberal (Govt)		1			1									
AUS Labor (Opp)		11			11									
AUS National														
AUS Country Liberal														

Figure 8: Statistical search results for the PLI "*My question is directed to the*".

3. The use of linguistic corpus tools for PLIs selection

This research uses a corpus-based approach to the selection and comparative study of distribution of phrasal lexical items (PLIs) which are characteristic of parliamentary discourse in the Australian Federal and New Zealand Parliaments. Such an approach is justified by the fact that "such items can only

be properly described and understood if they are considered together with the contexts in which they occur" (Moon, 1998: 1).

Corpus-based research has received much development in the last couple of decades due to the increased use of computers in corpus linguistics and the extensive development of various corpus software tools. "Corpus-based approaches to language have introduced new dimensions to linguistic description and to various applications by permitting some degree of automatic analysis of text" (Kennedy, 1998: 204). It is based on the computer assisted analysis of the actual patterns of language on the basis of a "finite-sized body of machine-readable texts, sampled in order to be maximally representative of the language variety under consideration" (McEnery & Wilson, 1996: 24). Thus, specialised corpora are compiled for a variety of different purposes, e.g. as an empirical basis for NLP programs, as reference materials for the compilation of grammars or dictionaries, as the basis for language acquisition, or for the study of language history (Geyken, 2007: 25).

The World Wide Web can serve as an example of an ever-growing and diverse set of natural texts that make up a corpus of modern language. It remains constantly updated and captures the language of a wide range of contemporary speakers. However, although a lot of sophisticated web-searching tools have been developed lately and one can find nearly everything on the Internet, the

Web as a corpus has been criticised for a number of reasons. Among those Fellbaum (2007: 6-7) mentions the inclusion of non-native data, the inability to annotate the Web data, the presence of specific syntactic constructions. Kilgarriff et al. (2006: 135) name another problem concerned with the use of the Internet as a corpus – duplication of data. Consequently, various corpora are compiled to satisfy different researchers' needs.

In this work Sinclair's definition of a corpus is used: "A corpus is a collection of naturally-occurring language texts, chosen to characterize a state of variety of a language" (1991: 171). A corpus of about 339,000 words containing all the Hansard transcripts for a year leading up to general elections in the New Zealand (2008) and Australian (2007) Parliaments was compiled for this project.

Corpus scholars argue, that size is the most important characteristic of a corpus as it can crucially affect the results of corpus linguistics investigations. Fellbaum (2007: 6), for instance, believes, that corpora of one million words of text seem sufficient for a study of phonological features, but they are too small to yield reliable frequency counts and to inform a linguist about the language's semantic, lexical and syntactic phenomena. Kennedy (1998: 45) claims, that "corpora of one million words [...] are too small for most kinds of lexical and semantic analysis". Sinclair (1991: 20) suggests, that 10-20 million words might

constitute “a useful small general corpus” but it “will not be adequate for a reliable description of the language as a whole”.

Another important requirement that a corpus should meet is that it must contain a considerable amount of important literature of various styles in a balanced proportions representative of a chosen time period (Geyken, 2007: 26). Rissanen (1992) suggests, that corpora compilers should adequately cover genre, geographical region, gender, age, sociolinguistic background and level of education of the persons who originally spoke or wrote the texts.

The Parliamentary Question Time corpus that was developed for the present research is relatively small. It includes data from the New Zealand and Australian Parliaments, namely Hansard records of Wednesday Question Time sessions for one year (2008 in New Zealand and 2007 in Australia). Those were the years when general elections were held in the two countries. Each Question Time session in the New Zealand Parliament lasted for about 45 minutes whereas in the Australian Federal House of Representatives the sessions were longer – 60 minutes. Thus, the corpus contains 19 full Question Time transcripts from the New Zealand House and 14 from the Australian Parliament. The total number of word tokens is 338,673.

The modest size of the corpus used for the present research, which contains only one type of texts can be explained by the aims of this project. Unlike major dictionary projects this paper focuses on the comparative study of phrasal lexical items used by MPs in the two Parliaments during a year before general elections when the political tension in the House reached its peak. Taking into account the restricted size and time frames for this project, only Wednesday Question Time sessions were chosen for the study in the two Parliaments. The diachronic comparative study of parliamentary discourse is a potential area for future research.

The process of phrasal lexemes selection from the corpus consisted of several steps. Initially the WordSmith 5.0.0.334 corpus tool was used to pre-select all the word strings found in the Parliamentary corpus. Kilgarriff et al. (2006: 127) point out that "A corpus is of optimal use for lexicographers if it is loaded into a corpus query tool which supports them in finding collocational and grammatical patterns".

In order to generate the list of word clusters the function WordList was used. A cluster is a type of electronically-derived word-combination (Demmen, 2009: 2). WordList allows generating a list of all index words that a document contains. This list is further used to produce a list of collocations or word clusters. The total number of records generated by the Word Clusters function

was 2,028,894. As the list contained many false positives it needed to be sorted manually to extract the meaningful expressions.

Among the false positives can be named such high frequency expressions as, for example, '*of the*' (6,056 occurrences), '*that is'* (1,608), '*is a*' (1,148) which are collocations from the syntactic point of view but they are hardly of any value for the present research as they do not bear any semantic meaning. The other type of false positive is duplicates. WordSmith searches the document and selects all the consecutive word strings. For example, in the following sentence uttered by the Australian Speaker '*Members on my right are holding up their own member's question*' (Australian Hansard, Question 19, 15.08.2008) the programme identified the following word strings:

```
135,269     # MEMBERS ON MY RIGHT ARE     2
135,270     # MEMBERS ON MY RIGHT ARE HOLDING   2
135,271     # MEMBERS ON MY RIGHT ARE HOLDING UP      2
135,272     # MEMBERS ON MY RIGHT ARE HOLDING UP THEIR      2
135,273     # MEMBERS ON MY RIGHT ARE HOLDING UP THEIR OWN  2
```

It is evident that each record is one word longer than the previous one and the last record contains all the records 135,269 to 135,272. Thus, the first four records are shorter duplicates of the last record and they can be discarded.

After the duplicates elimination, all the remaining word strings were carefully studied one by one and, if found to be / contain PLIs, classified into three main groups, otherwise dismissed as irrelevant and deleted from the example corpus. The three groups of PLIs are Parliamentary PLIs, general PLIs, titles and forms of address. PLIs were recognised as a result of their familiarity. In an ethnographic approach, exposure to a variety such as Parliamentary discourse gradually leads to familiarity with the recurrent and characteristic PLIs. The reason for using corpus-based tools is that none of these are missed.

In the string 135,273 I can identify at least two PLIs: '*Members on my right*' which is by all means a parliamentary PLI. Moreover, its usage is restricted to the Speaker of the House only because it is the Speaker who occupies a central seat in the House. All the other MPs are sitting more or less opposite each other. The other phrasal lexical item is '*to hold up + N*'. Although uttered in the Parliament, its use is not restricted to parliamentary discourse only, so it is classified as a general PLI.

Finally, all the low-frequency collocations had to be dismissed because single occurrence PLIs could hardly be characteristic of Parliamentary Question Time discourse. Moon (1998: 57) suggests, that 5 is the optimal frequency for PLIs per million of words (or in Moon's terminology Fixed Expressions including Idioms – FEIs) as "FEIs occurring 4 or fewer times [...] can be considered

random events". For this research the significance threshold was set at 10 because 9 and lower frequencies can hardly be significant for characterising a trend, especially when a comparative analyses is conducted.

At this point, however, I experienced some difficulties. If one looks at the word string 135,273 of the previous example, one will see that it is a low-frequency expression (the numbers after a word string indicates its number of instances of occurrence in the corpus) but the two PLIs that were found within this word string have more occurrences within the corpus, e.g. '*members on my right'* (13) and *'hold up + N'* (26 with various meanings). Thus, the frequency of occurrence of the selected lexemes needs to be double-checked.

Linguistic intuition, which has so far been employed as a research tool for this part of the project, is a controversial but necessary approach. Although some scholars criticise intuition for being subjective, many believe, that one's intuition about how to use language can lead to many useful investigations. Thus, Sinclair (2004: 45) claims, that "[i]n the evaluation of corpus evidence the researcher has virtually no option but to yield to the organising influence of his or her intuition". Johansson (2011: 119) thinks, that "[c]orpus use and intuition do not exclude each other; they go well together. It would be a mistake to reject what we can see with our 'inner eye'". Laviosa (2011: 138) states, that "[i]n this cyclical process of observation, discovery, hypothesis formation and testing,

intuition plays an important role, particularly in the initial selection of suitable lexical items to explore and in the interpretation of patterns emerging from corpus data".

Among the drawbacks of using linguistic intuition is lack of knowledge about the subject of study of research corpus content: "one can only judge phenomena that one is aware of" (Herold, 2007: 55); a researcher being a non-native speaker (as in my case): "[n]on-native speakers will likely have less reliable intuition" (Davies, 2011: 69).

Once the false positives have been separated from the linguistically interesting hits in the set of automatically generated example corpora, manual annotation is performed (Neumann et al., 2007: 72).

4. Summary of Chapter 3

This chapter has summarised the framework for the study of ethnography and phraseology of Parliamentary Question Time by providing a detailed description of approaches and tools for organising the research material which are essential for the investigation to be reported in the next chapters.

Section 2 of this chapter has outlined the process of the database development, creation of various tables in it in order to accommodate the needs of the present research. It has also identified some of the problems that I experienced while working on the database, and positive outcomes that I managed to achieve.

Section 3 gives a brief theoretical overview of modern approaches to corpus linguistics, describes the creation of the Parliamentary Question Time corpus and looks at the stages of PLIs extraction.

In the following chapter I will describe the historical prerequisites of parliamentary culture formation in Australia and New Zealand.

Chapter 4: HISTORIC OVERVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY TRADITIONS IN NEW ZEALAND AND AUSTRALIA

1. Introduction

This chapter provides a brief historic overview of origins of the establishment of parliamentary culture in New Zealand and Australia. The hypothesis investigated here is as follows: in spite of the many common features in the origins and development of the two countries, the parliamentary traditions developed in somewhat different ways. These differences found their reflection in the work of the two parliamentary systems in general, and in the behaviour and speech of its participants. The research is based on the notion of Question Time being a form of ritual performance where playing a part by any participant is restricted by certain behavioural and speech norms.

2. Question Time as a communicative performance

Both the Australian and New Zealand parliaments are within the Westminster tradition (R. A. Hughes, 2003; Jackson, 1987) but the evolution of their respective parliamentary cultures has taken somewhat different turns in Australia and New Zealand in spite of many common features in the origins, development and traditions of the two countries. According to Hall (2003: 52),

this happened because people not only structure spaces differently, but experience them differently and inhabit distinct sensory worlds.

Why should parliamentary Question Time be seen as a ritual? Parliament is certainly seen as theatre. “Its principal actors read their lines and act their parts with varying degrees of skill and dash. There is drama, humour, pathos. There is a colourful background and some ancient costumes. Occasionally there is even movement” (Solomon, 1986: 30). That is why the Question Time sessions will be viewed here as “the performance of more or less invariant sequences of acts and utterances not entirely encoded by the performers” (Rappaport, 1999: 24). According to Bauman (1977: 27), “the act of performance [is] a situated behaviour, situated within and rendered meaningful with reference to relevant contexts”. McAllister (2012: 15) defines performance as “forms of action which are aesthetically marked spatially and temporally framed and of a heightened and intense nature – actions ‘set apart’ from everyday life”, and Hymes (1974b) treats performance as a realm of social action, which emerges out of interaction with other speakers.

An act of communicative performance involves a number of essential features. In other words, “it is ‘keyed’ in various formal ways, through stylization, formulas and references to tradition, by the temporal and spatial setting in which it occurs, and by the paraphernalia that it requires” (McAllister, 2006:

69). Hymes (1974a) developed a mnemonic code using the word 'SPEAKING' to describe all the components of speaking within a cultural context. It uses the first letters of terms for speech components. The categories are so productive and powerful that they can be applied to a wide range of cultural performances. They are as follows:

S ***Setting and Scene*** ("Setting refers to the time and place of a speech act and, in general, to the physical circumstances" (Hymes, 1974a: 55)).

P ***Participants*** (Speaker(s) and audience – "The actors commonly share a world-view, a kinship network, economic interests, a local past, and a system of ritual replete with symbolic objects and actions which embody a cosmology" (Turner & Turner, 1986: 139)).

E ***Ends*** (Purposes, goals, and outcomes).

A ***Act Sequence*** (Form and order of the event).

K ***Key*** (Cues that establish the "tone, manner, or spirit" of the speech act (Hymes, 1974a: 57)).

I ***Instrumentalities*** (Forms and styles of speech (Hymes, 1974a: 58-60)).

N ***Norms*** (Social rules governing the event and the participants' actions and reaction).

G ***Genre*** (The kind of speech act or event).

It is appropriate to talk about Question Time as a communicative performance as all aspects of a situated, repetitive performance are present. In this it is like religious rituals such as church services for example. In Moore and Myerhoff's (1977: 15) opinion, both types of ritual have one common objective – "to influence this world. Both are supposed to have consequences, actual social or communicative psychological effects on living persons".

The Question Time ritual has a "many-levelled or tiered structure [...], each level having many sectors, [which] makes of these genres flexible and nuanced instruments capable of carrying and communicating many messages at once, even of subverting on one level what it appears to be 'saying' on another" (Turner, 1986a: 24). The sessions take place only in the Houses of Parliament. They take place daily at a set time and have a finite duration. There are a fixed number of participants – Members of the Parliament (MPs) – who occupy certain physical and institutional places in the House. Only they can be involved in discussions. There is a person – the Speaker of the House – whose responsibilities include maintaining order in the House and ruling on procedure. The sessions are open to an audience which normally consists of members of the public, mass media representatives and foreign guests. The proceedings are thoroughly documented by a clerk and the Hansard reporters, and filmed for future reference. And finally, a special language is used, which is subject to many limitations and specific conditions of use. In Goffman's (1980: 129)

opinion, “Throughout Western society there tends to be one informal or backstage language of behaviour, and another language of behaviour for occasions when a performance is being presented”.

It is important to keep in mind that a performance situation always occurs within a certain cultural context or social system because, “ritual is made up of routines” and “understanding routines requires shared cultural knowledge” (Saville-Troike, 1989: 44). Turner (1986a: 21-22) believes, that “performance is often a critique, direct or veiled, of the social life it grows out of” and a social system is “a set of loosely integrated processes, with some patterned aspects, some persistences of form, but controlled by discrepant principles of action expressed in rules of custom that are often situationally incompatible with one another” (Turner, 1986a: 75). McAllister (2006: 69-70) claims, that “it is through performance that social reality is defined and acted out by the participants, that established norms, customs and symbolic frameworks are brought into relation with the uncertain and the ambiguous in the search for renewed order, helping to frame communication and action and to create a basis for future action”.

Hymes (1973: 67) states, that “[m]embership in a speech community consists in sharing one or more of its ways of speaking – that is, not in knowledge of a speech style (or any other purely linguistic entity, such as a language) alone, but

in terms of knowledge of appropriate use as well. There are rules of use without which rules of syntax are useless". Thus when describing parliamentary Question Time it is necessary to take into account such factors as origins, development, history, traditions, language, beliefs, geographical position, boundaries and the political culture of a particular community.

3. History and geography of Australia and New Zealand

One may wonder why the two parliamentary traditions are not identical. Initially the term *Australasia* used to be a source of confusion as some people used to think of New Zealand and other South Pacific Islands as part of Australia. Early shared history might have contributed to such a perception. Nowadays with the cultural and economic links between Australia and New Zealand and the rest of the world one might believe, that although Australia and New Zealand are two different countries, they are similar in many ways; both of them are geographically quite isolated from the rest of the world, both were formerly British colonies, both were inhabited by indigenous people when British settlers arrived. Both are mainly Anglophone. However, a closer look will show that there are more differences than similarities in geography, history, development and languages of the two countries.

First of all, the geographical closeness of Australia and New Zealand is relative. At its nearest point New Zealand is over 1,200 miles or 2,100 km away from Australia. The former is a continent while New Zealand is an archipelago with an extensive coastline. The four main New Zealand cities are built on the coast, and one can hardly find a New Zealander who has never seen the ocean. For the inland inhabitants of Australia, however, this may not be the case. Australia is a land of plains and deserts but New Zealand is a country of mountains and lakes.

The major common historical feature is the colonization of Australia and New Zealand which made both parts of the British Empire. Both were settler societies (Belich, 2009).

The colonization of Australia began in 1787 as a result of economic factors when, "there were 100,000 convicts in England [...]. A convict in the hulks cost £26/15/11 a year, while he could be transported 10,000 miles for less than £20" (Roberts, 1969: 3). Thus, it was cheaper to transport convicts than to support them in England. Whereas before the American Civil War, convicts had been transported to America, after America gained independence, that was no longer possible, and so convicts were transported to Australia. After completing their terms, ex-convicts were encouraged to stay in the settlements and cultivate their 30 acres of land – or more if they were prepared to marry and have children. Tools, provisions, grain, cattle, sheep and dogs were also to be provided

(Kociumbas, 1992: 32). In 1793 free settlers started to arrive. At that period the colony experienced many difficulties because the soil was not very good for cultivation, the bigger part of the population was convicts and there were four men to every woman.

Despite its problems, the colony of New South Wales grew and during the 19th century the new colonies in South Australia, Western Australia, New Diemen's Land, Victoria, Queensland and Northern Territory were established.

In 1823, the British government established a New South Wales parliament by setting up a Legislative Council under the New South Wales Act 1823 (UK). This Act became a first step towards a 'responsible' Parliament in Australia. It is important to keep in mind the fact that the formation of the institution of government and the Parliament in Australia was influenced by the colonial status of the country which resulted in people striving for independence, and the creation of the States in Australia with their own powers. While the colonists wanted to create a united Australian State reflecting British political values, they also wanted to preserve what they had – the governments of the colonies which they had built (Solomon, 1986: 9).

Thus, the Federation of Australian States was founded in 1901. This is when Federal politics in Australia began. The Australian Constitution established a

federal system of government, under which the powers were distributed between a national government and the six states. The first Federal Parliament was opened in Melbourne, in the Parliament of Victoria building. It included only 75 members in the lower house and 36 senators in the upper house. Over time the numbers increased and the 2004-2007 Australian Federal Parliament included 150 MPs and 76 Senators. Thus, within the present Australian federal system it is more appropriate to speak of Parliaments rather than a single Parliament (R. A. Hughes, 2003: 223).

Although initially the Australian parliamentary system was modelled to a large degree on the British system, at present it combines the features of the US and British models of government. Butler (1974: 5) believes, that "after the United States, Australia provides the most interesting example of working federal government. And, after Great Britain, Australia provides the most interesting example of working parliamentary government." The system entails the bicameral Parliament of Australia which consists of the Queen, represented by the Governor-General and two houses, the Senate and the House of Representatives. The Ministers of State who are members of the government in the Parliament are the heads of the various Departments of State. They are accountable individually and collectively to the Parliament for the workings of those executive departments and therefore for the running of the business of government (R. A. Hughes, 2003).

The Lower House is generally regarded as the most important House in most bicameral systems because of its representative nature and, “it is in the House of Representatives that the major battles are fought out. This is where the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition are face to face, battling for the best headlines and the best reports in the media and out among the voters. It is in the House that most important Government announcements are made by the Prime Minister and his Ministers, and where the Opposition will launch its main attacks against the Government” (Solomon, 1986: 15). However, in Australia the representatives of both Houses are elected directly by people for three-year terms. The party system adopted in the contemporary Australian Parliament is regarded as being fairly inflexible. The main political parties represented in the House are the Australian Labor Party, the Liberal Party of Australia and the National Party of Australia. In recent years, however, there have also been a number of independent parties and Members.

The colonization of New Zealand by Great Britain began in an informal and unplanned manner. The first settlers to arrive were runaway sailors, whalers, adventurers and escaped convicts. In contrast to the convict settlement of New South Wales, there was no colonial plan as such. In 1838 the New Zealand Company was established to promote colonization, which officially began with the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840 (K. Sinclair, 2000). This established British authority in European eyes, and gave British immigrants

legal rights as citizens. After this the number of British migrants arriving in New Zealand started to grow rapidly. Until 1839 there were only about 2,000 immigrants in New Zealand; by 1852 there were about 28,000 ("Te Ara - The Encyclopedia of New Zealand," 2005-2013).

The process of colonization of New Zealand was largely based on the ideas of Edward Gibbon Wakefield, who believed, that the colonial settlements should be modelled on the structure of British society. That is why so many New Zealand cities were built and named in the British tradition. Although initially New Zealand was a dependency of New South Wales, its economy was totally dependent on the UK (Dalziel, 1981: 87).

In 1841 New Zealand was proclaimed a separate Crown Colony (Gardner, 1981: 59). However, “despite lofty talk of systematic colonization and British law and order, for some years after 1840 New Zealand exhibited a scene of anarchy” because, “almost all of the more serious difficulties of the settlers and their government were related to – if they did not derive from – the fundamental problem of racial relations. But, though they were dependent on the Maoris for food, the New Zealand Company settlers were blind to this reality or reluctant to face it” (K. Sinclair, 2000: 75).

With the influx of settlers to New Zealand and constant breaches of the Waitangi Treaty, land disputes with the Maori increased in number and later, in mid 1840s, turned into a war in Northland, and in the rest of the country during the 1860s. The Maori people outnumbered the Europeans. Besides, they were sophisticated warriors with developed military skills and tactics. Only the support of British troops helped the settlers to keep the Maori tribes from getting the upper hand. The impressive and successful resistance of the indigenous people was the feature that distinguished the process of New Zealand colonization from that in earlier days in Australia.

In 1852 the first New Zealand Constitution was passed through the British Parliament and New Zealand began its constitutional life as a dependency of New South Wales (McLintock, 1958: 98).

The Constitution Act of 1852 authorised the creation of one Supreme Legislation or a two-chamber Colonial Parliament in New Zealand totally in the Westminster tradition that was taken for granted (Dalziel, 1981: 93). For the first time the parliament met on 24 May 1854 in Auckland and was officially called “The General Assembly of New Zealand”.

The members for the House of Representatives were to be elected every five years. Initially the House of Representatives was intended to include from 24 to

42 members. The Legislative Council Members, however, were to be nominated. New Zealand was to be a united colony, not a federation – another major distinguishing feature from the Australian model of colonization.

There have been many significant changes in the parliamentary system of New Zealand during the course of its development. The major ones include the introduction of a shorter parliamentary term in 1879, the abolition of the Upper House in 1951, the passing of a new Constitution Act in 1986 and the cancellation of two-party monopoly of seats in the House in 1996 (McGee, 2005). Moreover, the change of colonial status had its say in the establishment of a result-oriented government body (Jackson, 1987). Important constitutional legislation is protected by the conventions that have developed. However, currently any governing group with a majority of votes in the House of Representatives has the authority to make or change law in New Zealand. As Jackson (1987: 15) puts it, "[c]onstitutional niceties are largely alien to the New Zealand way of life, New Zealanders want results and the New Zealand Parliament tends to be characterised by 'gumboot constitutionalism'".

Today the Parliament of New Zealand is a unique political formation, which officially consists of the Governor-General and the House of Representatives. Jackson (1987: ix, 5) claims, that "the House is the centrepiece of the New Zealand political system" and it is characterised by strong party cohesion, a

high level of partisanship, limited majorities, and a fairly high degree of functional centralisation. As a result, nowadays New Zealand is a representative democratic state with a unicameral, predominantly two-party parliamentary system, whose work is regulated by the 1986 Constitution Act. The system is in constant development: “Rules in New Zealand are formulated as the game proceeds” (Jackson, 1987: 23).

4. Summary of Chapter 4

A brief overview of the two parliamentary systems shows that in spite of some common features in the origin and roots going back to the Westminster parliamentary tradition, history and initial organisation, now there are few common points in the structure and work of the two Parliaments. (Table 1 shows the main structural differences between the two systems). This, amongst other factors, makes it possible to suppose that there will be significant differences in the Question Time running, rules and conventions governing this sector of parliamentary work and sets of formulaic expressions, phraseological units and stylistic features typical of this process, which will be the object of this project.

	Population of country (mln)	No. of chambers	Size of (lower) chamber	Parliamentary term (years)	No. of political parties in the Parliament
New Zealand (in 2008)	4.1	1	121	3	7
Australia (in 2007)	20.7	2	150	3	3

Table 1. Differences between the New Zealand and Australian parliamentary systems.

This chapter has analysed the historic formation of the two Parliaments. How the Parliament and its proceedings are viewed is discussed in the following chapter which contains an ethnographic overview of Question Time in the Australian Federal and New Zealand Parliaments.

Chapter 5: ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF QUESTION TIME

1. Introduction

This chapter will take a closer look at the potential for difference in the two parliamentary systems by comparing their Question Time procedures. Here I will justify the approach of treating Question Time as a ritual and describe in comparison the stages of Question Time in the New Zealand and Australian Houses of Representatives. The ethnography of Parliamentary Question Time will contribute to an understanding of the communicative and procedural differences of Question Time and provide the detailed description of this ritual in the two parliaments.

2. Question Time as a ritual

Question Time is an important part of parliamentary work for both governments because "these situations – arguments, combats, rites of passage – are inherently dramatic because participants not only do things, they try to show others what they are doing or have done; actions take on a 'performed-for-an-audience' aspect" (Schechner, 1977: 120). The importance of oral questions is indicated by the fact that question periods are set aside in the Houses each sitting day. It is also considered to be the most popular feature of the House as Question Time sessions have long turned into a tactical strategy for testing the Ministers in

public. Hence, it is particularly well-attended by most Members. MPs consider it to be a powerful tool for getting information and gaining their political goals.

May (1989: 287) believes, that the main purpose of oral questions is "obtain information" and "press for actions". De Ayala (2001: 147) disagrees by saying, that when "MPs table questions for oral answer, they usually look for the occasion to attack the Government, or support it". McGee (2005: 545) expresses a similar point of view by saying, that "The question period offers members an opportunity to put potentially embarrassing questions to the Government and obliges the Government to respond publicly to them". Butler (1974: 51) outlines the main principle of Question Time as follows: "The great quality of doctrine of individual ministerial responsibility is that it forces a minister to dig – or to get his officials to dig – down into his department, to explain his department's actions and to find remedies in cases of demonstrated error. The sanction on his doing this is that his political reputation depends upon it. The essential virtue of question time lies in the implication that ministers must respond".

2.1. Question Time in the New Zealand Parliament

In the New Zealand Parliament, Question Time sessions take place every sitting day starting at 2pm. During these sessions twelve oral questions to Ministers (and occasionally to other MPs) can be asked and answered. Technically any

MP can table a question for oral answer but no questions can be asked without a prior notice in the New Zealand Parliament. Before 1986 all questions for oral answer were lodged two or more days in advance. Since 1996 all oral questions have been lodged in the course of the morning of the day when they are to be answered (McGee, 2005).

According to Jackson (1987: 144) all parliamentary questions fall into two main categories: those genuinely seeking information (which may have political implications), and those whose primary purpose is to score political points. Thus, it is a common practice for the Opposition Members to use oral questions as a tool to show their disagreement with the policies and decisions of the Government. Besides, the Opposition Members' rule in tabling the questions for oral answer can be summed up in the old parliamentary saying, "never ask a question to which you don't already know the answer".

Government Members, on the other hand, tend to ask questions so as to present the actions of the Government in a favourable way. To ensure this, the Government party rosters a backbench member each week to ask a sufficient number of government questions. In this case Government MPs' questions are forwarded to the Minister concerned before the Question Time session for approval (Jackson, 1987). In this respect Rasiah (2007b: 5) expresses a serious doubt that "a process by which the Government asks itself pre-prepared

questions and responds with pre-prepared answers would serve any accountability purpose or provide meaningful information".

Whichever party Member submits a question, they should submit them in advance so that the Clerk can check them for compliance with Standing Orders. Thus, when uttered in the House the main questions are perfectly in order. However, every main question should be followed by at least one supplementary question in the New Zealand House of Representatives. It is in the course of supplementary questions that the effect of unexpectedness is achieved, and Question Time can become quite disruptive. "It is in the supplementaries that Question Time achieves its main aim: surprise the Minister, and oblige him/her to improvise" (De Ayala, 2001: 147). Thus, supplementary questions are the main source for interjections and points of order.

Although interjections are not allowed during the sessions, quite a lot of them can be heard in the course of such question periods. The Speaker will generally tolerate them as long as they do not get out of hand (McGee, 2005: 561-562).

2.1.1. New Zealand Parliament Standing Orders

There are many formal and working rules of behaviour during the work of the House, including Question Time periods. For example, when asking or answering a question, indirect form of address in third person is recommended. Titles should be observed when addressing other Members. However, as many MPs are elected from the party lists and do not have electorates by which they could be referred, a new rule was adopted allowing the Members to refer to each other by their full names (McGee, 2005: 183). The use of first names alone is still unacceptable, e.g.:

> **RON MARK:** *The point is that that there is the possibility that we will end up with the situation where the video and the DVD show* ***Mr. English*** *saying precisely what my leader,* ***Winston Peters****, said he said and the written copy reflects what* ***Gerry Brownlee*** *claims he said, which is not accurate* (New Zealand Hansard, Question 06, 09.04.2008).

Standing Orders is the set of rules regulating behaviour and procedures in the House. Such a document is necessary for regulating the Question Time procedure as any ritual "frequently interrupts or manages or accompanies various forms of disorder, ranging from the ordinary rough and tumble confusion of everyday life, through the disorder of choice, and the multiplicity of inconsistencies in ideologies and in social arrangements" (Moore & Myerhoff, 1977: 17).

Thus, Standing Orders prohibit certain references, expressions and figures of speech, which are considered to be unparliamentary. Those include arguments, inferences, imputations, epithets, ironical expressions and expressions of opinion. Oral questions must not contain statements of facts and names of persons unless they are strictly necessary for the intelligibility of the question (*Standing Orders*, 2008).

Questions must be concise (*Standing Orders*, 2008). When MPs lodge their questions with the Clerk, all questions are checked for compliance with the Standing Orders. If a question is not in order as lodged, it is returned to the member concerned or it may be accepted subject to amendment or authentication of a statement or quotation contained in it (McGee, 2005: 548).

2.1.2. The New Zealand House of Representatives Debating Chamber

It is important to remember that the Question Time sessions in the New Zealand House of Representatives are highly structured events with a certain unchangeable pattern due to their ritualistic nature and cultural, historical and political traditions. Everything matters here and additional rules come into effect as a product of such organisation. For example, the layout of the chamber where the House sittings take place follows the Westminster parliamentary tradition. It is a large, rectangular richly decorated chamber with the Speaker's

seat opposite the entrance. Its central location is determined by the rule that demands that MPs who ask or answer questions address them not directly to other members but to the Speaker of the House by "catching the Speaker's eye". McGee (2005: 183) believes, that this practice "assists in restraining quarrels or personal recriminations in the House by figuratively interposing the Speaker between Members".

The rows of seats on the Speaker's right hand side are for the government members; those to the Speaker's left are the Opposition's benches. All the Members are allocated individual seats in the chamber according to their status, party rank and portfolio. Thus, the Prime Minister sits at the second bench from the Speaker's chair. Opposite that bench is the seat of the Leader of the Opposition. When a different party comes to power, the disposition of seats in the House changes.

All the MPs, including the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition, are required to stand up and address the Speaker from their allocated positions. If two or more members rise together it is the member called upon by the Speaker who is entitled to speak (*Standing Orders*, 2008).

In the middle of the chamber there are two tables. The first desk is the Hansard table where the reporters who record the MPs' speeches sit. Between the

Hansard table and the Speaker's chair is the Table of the House on which all papers submitted to the House are placed or '*tabled*'. Tabling of a document is an important procedure in keeping the Parliament informed. In order to '*table*' a document a Member is required to '*take leave to table a document*'. The document is then placed on the Table and later the copies are put in every wooden in-tray in the parliamentary complex, unless the MPs specifically ask for it not to be. The Clerk of the House sits at the far end of the Table.

The balcony area above the Speaker's chair is the press gallery where media representatives sit and report on debates and proceedings in the House. On the left and right of the press gallery are the public galleries where members of the public may sit and observe the House and listen to debates. Opposite the press gallery is the Speaker's gallery which is reserved for special visitors to Parliament. On the right hand side immediately below the Speaker's gallery is the broadcasting box from which all debates in the House are broadcast live to air (O'Sullivan, 2007).

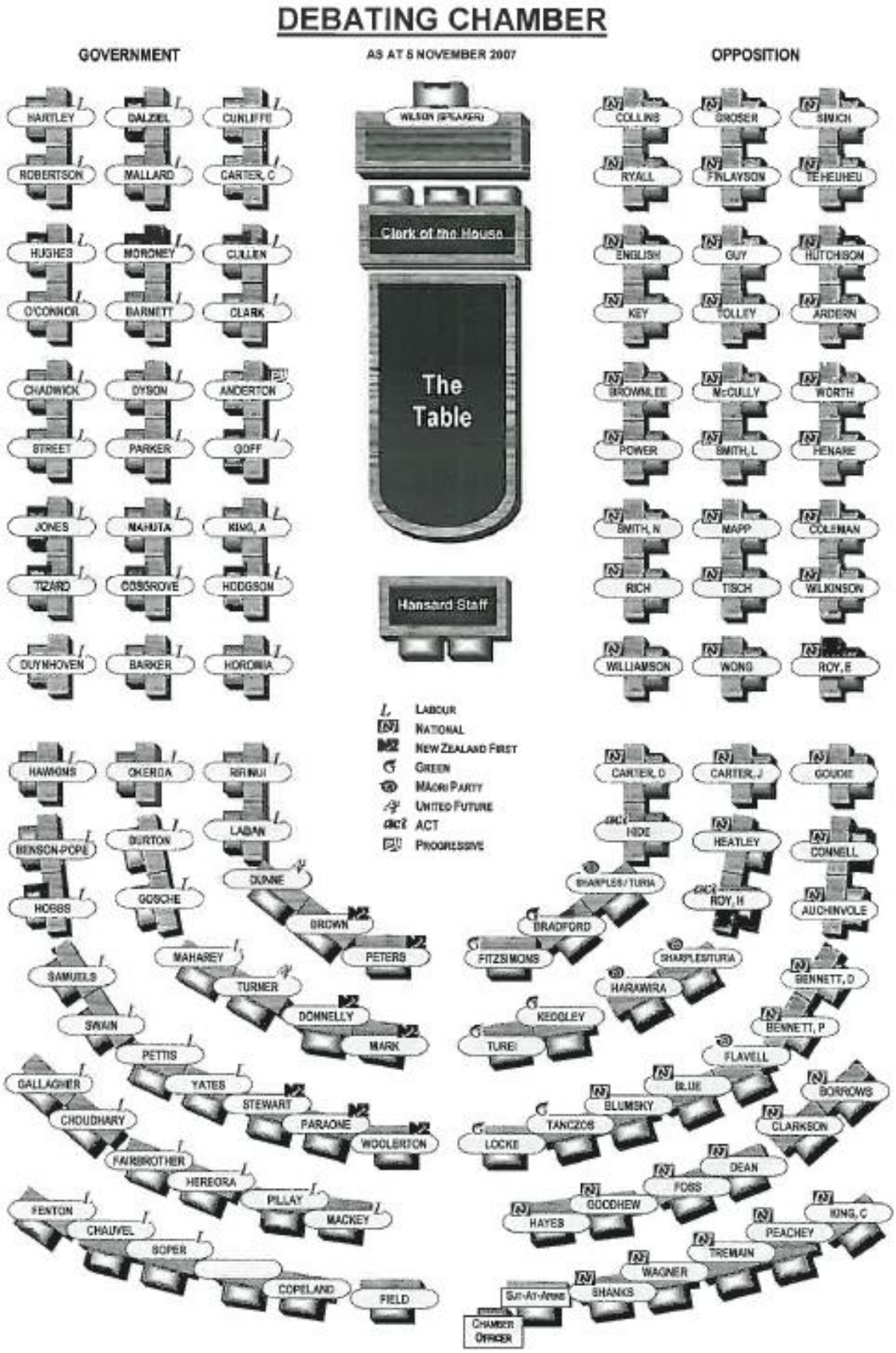


Figure 9: New Zealand House of Representatives Seating Plan (extracted from www.parliament.nz)

Although the Speaker is the chair of the House whose responsibilities include maintaining order in the chamber, ruling on the procedures and resolving disputes, all the MPs may take part in doing these by means of raising points of order. A point of order is a parliamentary procedure used by the MPs to interrupt the business of the House if it is thought that a breach of rules outlined in Standing Orders has taken place.

The most common reason for the points of order to be raised is the use of so-called unparliamentary language by MPs. Unparliamentary language, as indicated earlier, includes offensive words against the members and the House, personal reflections, imputations of improper motives and accusations of telling lies or corruption.

There is no list of unparliamentary expressions as it is, which the MPs are not to use in the Chamber. As is stated in the current House of Representatives Practice document (2012: 514), "the determination as to whether words used in the House are offensive or disorderly rests with the Chair". If an expression is ruled to be unparliamentary the Speaker requires that the MP "*withdraw and apologise*". McGee (2005: 187) believes, that "whether a particular phrase is offensive or disorderly depends upon the context in which it is used, and an expression acceptable in one context may be unacceptable in another".

2.2. Question Time in the Australian Federal Parliament

Question Time in the Australian House of Representatives is considered to be an important part of parliamentary business. Ryan (2009: 18) claims, that "[i]t is the focal point in the parliamentary schedule where all MPs across the political, regional, and ideological spectrum meet to question the government. It is also generally viewed as the most powerful tool the opposition has to ensure the executive is held accountable for its actions".

The Question Time sessions are usually scheduled from 2 to 3 pm on each sitting day, at which time "the Speaker shall interrupt any business before the House and call on questions without notice." (*Standing and Sessional Orders*, 2010: 48)[1]. Turner (1986a: 22) believes, that "'discontinuum' of action among the same collection of people, culturally made possible by setting aside times and places for cultural performances, is equally part of the ongoing social process – the part where those people become conscious, through witnessing and often participating in such performances, of the nature, texture, style, and given meanings of their own lives as members of sociocultural community". Thus "all ministers have to be on the front bench for one prime hour of the working day on the off-chance of being asked a question" and "it is then that

[1] The 2010 version of "House of Representatives Standing and Sessional Orders" is cited here because basically it is the revised standing orders adopted on 24 June and 13 August 2004, which came into effect on the first day of sitting of the 41st Parliament (16 November 2004).

they can make or break their reputations" (D. Butler, 1974: 31). Although the open debate of Question Time is essential to democracy, quite often the conduct of MPs and Ministers turns it into a rowdy and boisterous performance.

Similarly to the New Zealand Question Time sessions "[o]pposition members in Australia try to ask questions which will embarrass the Government in relation to policies or ministerial performances. Government questioners try to redress the balance by asking questions which highlight praiseworthy aspects of Government policy, or which allow Ministers to try to denigrate Opposition policies" (Solomon, 1986: 29). A similar idea is expressed in Young (2007: 240): "Question Time is not only a mechanism for government accountability, but also of political opportunism. Opposition members try, in their questioning, to emphasise any matters that will embarrass the Government, while its supporters try to provide Ministers with an opportunity to present their policies and actions in the most favourable light and to embarrass the Opposition". Butler (1974: 20) noticed that: "[t]he language of parliamentary debates [...] is often laced with rudenesses that are quite uncharacteristic [...] of the orators when they are off the floor of the House". Dobell and Reid (1992: 2) even go as far as to term the Question Time periods as "daily gladiatorial contests". A former Australian politician Janine Haines (as quoted in ("Cheryl Kernot on politics, the media and female leadership," 2012)) describes it as the "ritual stag fight".

The unprepared nature of oral questions in the Australian House of Representatives is the main feature that distinguishes Question Time sessions in the Australian Federal House of Representatives from those in New Zealand. Jackson (1987: 143) argues, that "the process [becomes] much more disorderly and exciting since questions can be asked without notice". Any Member can ask a question orally of a Minister or a Member who is not a Minister about their work, actions and policies, as well as the results achieved. This includes the Prime Minister who, as in New Zealand, is expected to attend every Question Time session and answer the questions put to him or her. This particular feature differentiates the Australian and New Zealand Parliamentary systems from, for example, the British one – the source of political institutions in the two countries – where the Prime Minister lives and works at 10 Downing Street and visits the parliament relatively rarely; and from the US Federal Parliament where the President attends the Congress only to make an occasional address to it (Solomon, 1986: 9). Questions can also be asked of the Speaker of the House and even backbenchers but only on the matters related to the business of the House. This does not happen in the New Zealand Parliament.

The other difference lies in the fact that there is no time limit on answers in the Australian House of Representatives. The question-answer sessions, due to their unprepared nature, tend to be quite long. Unlike in the New Zealand Parliament,

supplementary questions are not permitted. Under such circumstances a Minister should always be well-prepared to be able to answer questions on the whole range of topics and activities covered by his department, because "he knows that to admit ignorance or to demand time to prepare a reply is to be a failure" (D. Butler, 1974: 31). Quite often the Ministers can ask Government backbenchers to ask them a particular question so that they can give a well-rehearsed answer to the Parliament and score some points (Solomon, 1986: 30). This happens during the daily pre-Question Time briefing sessions where each Minister holds a meeting with their staff to prepare for what could happen during the Question Time.

In spite of the fact that remarks and supplementary questions are not allowed, the MPs use every chance to ask additional questions or comment on Ministers' answers. The Ministers, in their turn, use every opportunity to reply, sometimes in unparliamentary manner. As a famous Australian saying goes: "You can't be too nice – this is politics, not clap hands" (D. Butler, 1974: 20).

Thus, it is common for points of order to be raised during Question Time periods, for example, on the issue of unparliamentary language being used or on the issue of relevance as a Minister answering questions will normally attempt to redirect the answer to attack their opponents. However, as long as the Minister is talking on the general subject of the matter raised in the question, it

is usually considered relevant to the question, even if it does not address the specific issue raised in the question at all: “In Australia a Minister is basically able to answer as he or she sees fit so long as the content is relevant to the question, and even then, Ministers are permitted a wide degree of latitude” (Young, 2007: 241).

2.2.1. Australian Parliament Standing and Sessional Orders

As is the case in the New Zealand House of Representatives, there are required rules of behaviour in the Australian Parliament, which are outlined in the ‘The House of Representatives Standing and Sessional Orders’ document (2003). It prohibits using rude, unparliamentary words and expressions, criticising other Members, statements of facts or names of persons, arguments, inferences, imputations, ironical expressions or hypothetical matter. No debates are allowed.

In Bloch’s (1975: 12) opinion, “the extreme formalisation of language with its accompanying exercise of power is characteristic of traditional authority situations”. However, as Solomon (1986: 30) notes: “questioners never seem to have any trouble in expressing their questions in such a way as to make their own views clear, or to demonstrate their antagonism towards the policies or decisions of their political opponents”.

Standing and Sessional Orders are a complex set of rules regulating ways of behaving and counting votes in the House, controlling the ways the Parliament goes about its business. For example, following the Westminster tradition, the MPs are called “Honourable Members”. They may not direct their remarks at opponents, but must instead refer to them in the third person through the Chair. They also cannot call addressees by name, but instead only by the name of their electoral constituency (Young, 2007: 241) because “convention inhibits meaningful eye contact, and discourages normal dialogue [...] because addressing Members directly invites response, but Members are expected to hear in silence whomsoever has the call [although t]hey cannot always restrain themselves” (Kitson, 2007).

2.2.2. The Australian House of Representatives Debating Chamber

If one looks at the Australian Federal Parliament House in Canberra, they will see that in spite of its modern look, it was built in the Westminster tradition not without a purpose. In Goffman’s opinion (1980: 126), setting plays a very significant role in any performance, and moreover, “decorations and permanent fixtures in a place where a particular performance is usually given, as well as the performers and performance usually found there, tend to fix a kind of spell over it; even when the customary performance is not being given in it, the place

tends to retain some of its front region character". Wilson (2011: 179) stresses the importance of setting viewing it from a communicative event angle: "the spatial organisation of each event is as much a part of the formula that specifies it as a discrete communicative event as the discourse that takes place within this space".

Foucault (1975: 198) believes, that "architecture [is] a political 'technology' for working out the concerns of government – that is control and power over individuals – through the special 'canalization' of everyday life". That is why the Australian Federal House of Representatives was built as a large chamber decorated in green upholstery and carpets, just like the House of Commons in London. However, unlike the British Chamber of Commons, which is quite a long hall where the Members have no permanent seats, the House of Representatives in Canberra has a more rounded shape and each MP is assigned a seat. At present it houses 150 members but there is enough space for future increases in numbers.

As "all behaviour is located in and constructed of space" (Low & Lawrence-Zúñiga, 2003: 1) the Australian Speaker's Chair occupies the central location facing the entrance similarly to the New Zealand House of Representatives. Its position in the Chamber clearly indicates who presides during the debates. It is an elaborately carved replica of the original House of Commons' Speaker's

Chair. Another gift from the British Parliament is the mace, the symbol of the authority of the Speaker. Ceremonial dress is available to the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate. They are entitled to wear a black Queen's Counsel's silk gown, full buttoned judge's wig and lace cuffs and jabot. These are still worn by Liberal Party incumbents of those offices, but not by the Labor party representatives (Solomon, 1986: 58, 60, 62).

One Member at a time has the Chair's call and for this the Member needs to approach a massive square table with the microphone right in front of the Speaker's Chair. That Member should be heard in silence, although sometimes others become so excited that they interject. To interrupt formally they "*rise to a Point of Order*" to call out 'Mr. Speaker!' and advise the Chair of their concerns. The importance of the Speaker's role in the House can be illustrated by the fact that "when Members or Senators enter or leave their Chamber, they bow to the Presiding Officer, as a mark of respect (Solomon, 1986: 63).

Members of the Government's seats are to the right of the Speaker while Members of the Opposition sit to the left. Minor party's MPs and Independents sit on the benches at the curve of the chamber. The Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition sit at a central table upon which rest two ornate wooden chests called despatch boxes. The MPs who '*have the call*' are supposed to leave their seats and come up to one of the tables to speak. When

speaking they are supposed to face and address the Speaker thus allowing him or her to maintain order and control the situation in the Chamber, which is a very important part of the Speaker's job. In Goffman's opinion (1980: 15), "regardless of the particular objective which the individual has in mind and of his motive for having this objection, it will be in his interests to control the conduct of the others, especially their responsive treatment of him."

"Oratory is useless without an audience, indeed it may depend upon the character of the audience for its style and argument" (Firth, 1975: 33). Thus, the grand political theatre, mentioned above, needs an audience if it is to achieve anything. Parliament relies on the fact that it is being broadcast to get some of its message across (Solomon, 1986: 7), because "TV, radio, and a national press reduce regional isolation and increase the ease with which new ideas and attitudes spread" (Massey, 1994: 201). Besides, "[Question Time] is what citizens see most regularly through short clips on the evening news and what shapes their opinion of the Parliament" (Ryan, 2009: 18). So the seats for mass media representatives are located right above the Speaker's Chair in the House giving them the opportunity to see everybody in the House (except, probably, the Speaker) well. Members of the public can watch parliamentary proceedings from the balcony on both sides of the Chamber. "Listeners might not appreciate the effect of physical setting, but in this sunken amphitheatre, especially during Question Time, a loud voice, aggressive delivery and preparedness to defy conventions, are qualifications for success" (Kitson, 2007).

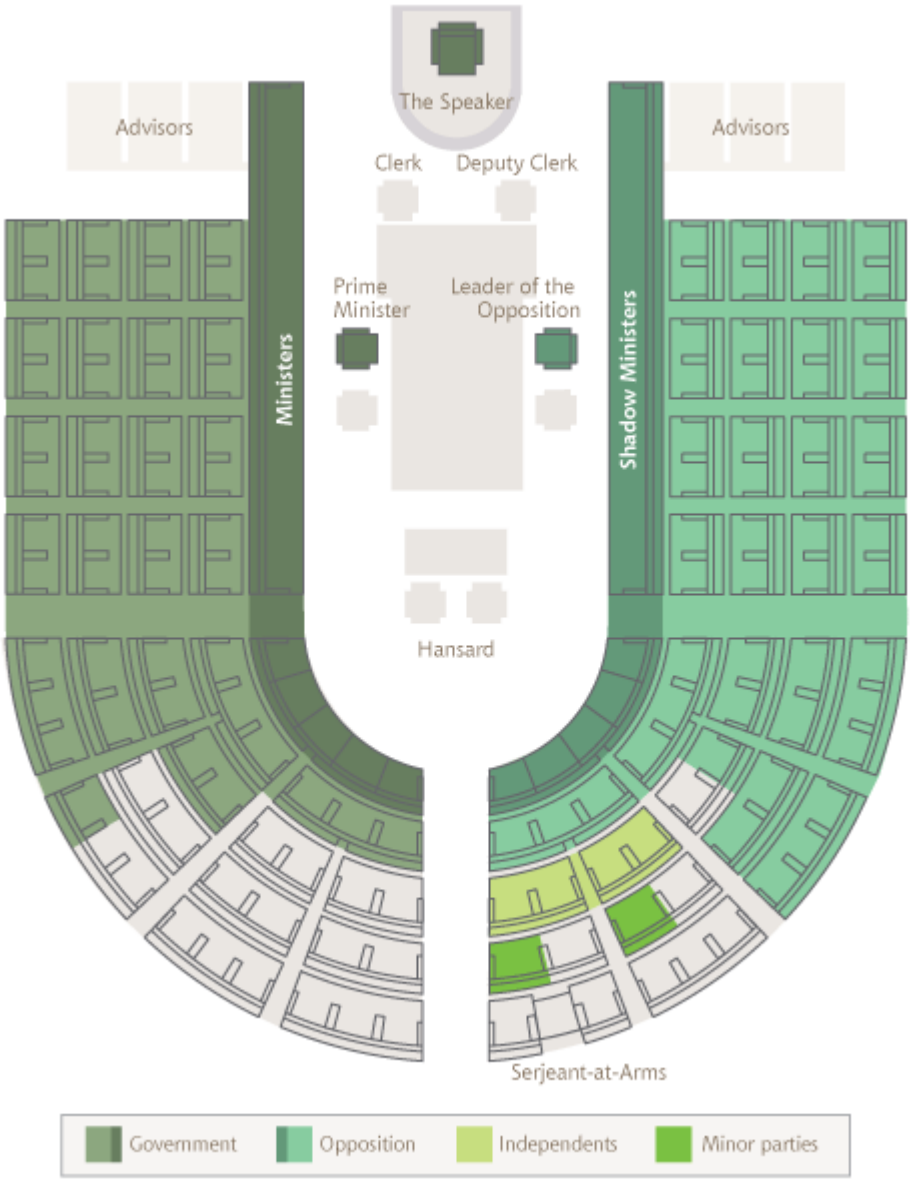


Figure 10: Australian House of Representatives Seating Plan (Extracted from http://www.peo.gov.au/multimedia/library/pages/0130.html)

Although it is the Speaker of the House who occupies the central position in The House, runs the Question Time periods and resolves disputes in the Australian House, the power of the executive is increasingly seen to be symbolically encapsulated in the figure of the Prime Minister (Young, 2007:

235). It is the Prime Minister who chairs the cabinet and decides, among other things, when the Question Time sessions should come to an end. In this case the Prime Minister or Minister in charge of the House asks that "*further questions be put on notice*". This is a signal that further questions will not be answered by Ministers, even if they are asked.

3. Stages of Question Time

Now let us look at the stages of the Question Time sessions in the Australian Federal and New Zealand Houses of Representatives in detail. According to Victor Turner, "performances are never amorphous or openended, they have diachronic structure, a beginning, a sequence of overlapping but isolable phases and an end" (Turner, 1986a: 80), but at the same time a performance "is always 'emergent', regularly saying something new, having effects different from in the past and never complete or fixed (McAllister, 2012: 15).

Firth (1975: 29, 31-32) believes, that when studying the work of "a formal assembly of people gathered to receive a communication or hold a discussion on a matter of public interest" it is important to answer the following questions: who initiates the assembly and how; what is the composition of the audience; who are the speakers, and how far are they pre-selected; how far are they communicating their own ideas or transmitting the ideas of others; how far is

the context of what they say treated as new information or as expression or formalisation of matter already known; and how far is the speech used by the speaker instrumentally to aid some immediate manoeuvre or to elevate or reaffirm his status more generally? Thus, the following phases have been found during Question Time periods:

1. The opening stage of Question Time
2. The questions and answers stage
    - Asking (main) questions
    - Answering (main) questions
    - Asking supplementary questions
    - Answering supplementary questions
    - Raising points of order
    - Interruptions and comments
    - Speaker's ruling
    - Comment withdrawals and apologies
    - Personal explanations
    - Questions to the Speaker
    - Additional answers
3. The closing stage of Question Time.

4. The opening stage of Question Time

It is the Speaker in the Australian Federal Parliament who is entitled to interrupt the business of the House at 2 pm at each sitting day for the Question Time session to start. Taking into account the robust nature of debates in Australia, almost each Speaker's remark starts with the word "*Order*", which serves to establish the order in the Chamber and to attract the attention of MPs to the Speaker's words.

If an MP's speech needs to be interrupted, the Speaker thanks the MP who currently has the call "*I thank the member for Lingiari*". After this phrase the Speaker normally explains why the MP's speech was interrupted by saying "*It being 2 pm, the debate is interrupted in accordance with standing order 97. The debate may be resumed at a later hour and the member will have leave to continue speaking when the debate is resumed*". It is a standard initiation formula that Hon. David Hawker, the Speaker of the 41st Australian Federal Parliament used to utter to start Question Time. It was used 10 times on Wednesday sessions during 2007.

If for some reasons the Question Time sessions could not be started as per the usual schedule in the Australian Federal House, the Speaker had to explain this to the House by using the formula "*It being 2.30 pm, the debate is interrupted in accordance with the resolution agreed to earlier today*". The standard statement

would normally follow this sentence, letting the MPs know that the debate will be continued after the Question Time session.

In the New Zealand House of Representatives the Speaker announces the beginning of Question Time by saying *"The House comes to questions for oral answer"*. As the variation of the initiation phrase given above, Hon. Margaret Wilson could use a more informal expression *"We come to questions for oral answer"*. However, this formula was used only once at the Wednesday Question Time session on 19 March in 2008.

Apparently, all the Question Time sessions tended to start as per the House sitting schedule as the Speaker did not need to use any explanatory remarks to justify the delay.

5. The questions and answers stage

5.1. Asking Main Questions

5.1.1. New Zealand

After the opening stage is completed, it is followed by the next stage when the Speaker calls for the first main question. Hon. Margaret Wilson, Speaker of the New Zealand House of Representatives simply reads out the name from the list of questions scheduled for the day's Question Time session: "*Question number one. John Key".* According to the Parliament rule, as indicated earlier, all the questions for oral answer are to be lodged in the morning of the day when they are to be answered, so the Speaker has a list of questions in the order in which they are to be answered. Thus, she does not need to make sure that both the Government and the Opposition Members get a fair chance to ask their questions. However, she will need to do this when it comes to the supplementary questions.

It is important to notice that main questions asked by the New Zealand MPs tend to be very general in nature as they go through the thorough check mentioned previously before being allowed to be asked in the chamber, e.g.:

> **ANNE TOLLEY** (National—East Coast) to the Minister for Social Development and Employment: *Does she have confidence in Child, Youth and Family; if not, why not?* (NZ Hansard, Question 12, 09.04.2008)

The transition to the second and all the other main questions is marked by a formulaic phrase "*[Any further supplementaries?] [No?] [Then] question*

number two. Charles Chouvel." The sections in the square brackets can be omitted.

When getting a call, MPs usually thank the Speaker and then read out their question indicating each time who their question is addressed to, irrespective of the fact that every MP in the House has a list of questions for the day's session in their Order of Business document, e.g.

> **MADAM SPEAKER:** *Question number two. Charles Chauvel.*
>
> **CHARLES CHOUVEL:** *Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Finance and asks: What reports has he received on patterns of wage growth in Australia and New Zealand?*

The underlined sentences are excluded from the Hansard and can only be heard when listening to the proceedings live. Recall that for this research video records of Question Time have been used to monitor the ethnographic features.

The Hansard record for the example given earlier is as follows:

> 2. **CHARLES CHAUVEL** (Labour) to the Minister of Finance: *What reports has he received on patterns of wage growth in Australia and New Zealand?* (NZ Hansard, Question 2, 05.03.2008)

If a question is asked of a female Minister who happens to be away on the day, then the Associate Minister or another appointed MP answers the question on behalf of the Minister. It is interesting to note that the MP asking the question still addresses the Minister in the third person singular using the pronoun 'she' both in the main question and in all the supplementaries. This does not happen in the Australian Parliament as the questions are not prepared in advance and MPs see who is present in the Chamber.

> 12. **ANNE TOLLEY** (National—East Coast) to the Minister for Social Development and Employment: *Does **she** have confidence in Child, Youth and Family; if not, why not?*
>
> **Hon. DARREN HUGHES** (Associate Minister for Social Development and Employment) on behalf of the Minister for Social Development and Employment: *Yes, because it delivers its difficult role of both care and protection and youth justice matters in a hard-working and conscientious manner.* (NZ Hansard, Question 12, 09.04.2008)

Different MPs have their own styles of asking main questions and many tend to ask questions of particular Ministers. For instance, the 2008 Leader of the Opposition, John Key, addressed his main questions to the Prime Minister Helen Clark only. His questions covered all possible areas of the Prime Minister's responsibilities. In 2008 he asked 18 main questions and all of them were very general in nature and followed two patterns:

- *Does she [continue to] stand by her statement (10) / answer[s](1) / response (1) / comment (1) ...; if so, why (3)? / if not, why [not] (3)?*
- *Does she have confidence in the / her Minister[s] of / for (5) ...; if so, why? (4).*

The words in the square brackets can be omitted or slightly changed. The numbers in brackets show the number of times the expression was used by the Leader of the Opposition on Wednesdays in 2008.

There are more and less active MPs in the Parliament, and also those who hardly ever uttered a word in 2008. Let us look at these three categories of people more closely.

There is a group of MPs who attend every session in the Parliament and take an active part in all the discussions. These Members always have many questions to ask and remarks to make. They can be separated into two groups. To the first group we can refer those MPs who are interested in one particular problem and tend to ask lots of questions of the Ministers responsible for that matter. The following MPs can be referred to this group (The MPs who asked 0, 1 or 2 questions in 2008 are excluded from the table):

MP's Name	**Political Party**	**No. of Questions asked in 2008**	**Area of interest** (no. of questions asked)

Hon. Vui Mark Gosche	Labour	3	ACC (2)
Sue Bradford	Green	3	Social development and employment (2)
Ron Mark	NZ First	3	Police (3)
Hon. Tau Henare	National	4	Maori affairs (4)
Dr. the Hon. Lockwood Smith	National	5	Immigration (5)
Lesley Soper	Labour	5	Health (4)
Barbara Stewart	NZ First	5	Health (5)
Phil Heatley	National	6	Housing (6)
Anne Tolley	National	6	Education (5)
Gerry Brownlee	National	7	Energy (5)
Charles Chauvel	Labour	7	Finance (6)
Simon Power	National	7	Justice (6)
Judith Collins	National	8	Social development and employment (6)
Hon. Tony Ryall	National	13	Health (13)

Table 2: List of New Zealand MPs having a particular area of interest.

The other table shows the MPs whose areas of interest are more versatile; but even here one can see that most of the Members have "favourite" topics and tend to ask more questions on this subject matter. However, most of them are representatives of the Opposition and minor parties rather than the Government. This fact can support the idea that the Ministers ensure that backbenchers ask questions at every Question Time session in order to show the Government's actions and decisions in a favourable way.

MP's Name	**Political Party**	**No. of Questions asked in 2008**	**Areas of interest** (no. of questions asked)
Moana Mackey	Labour	3	Youth affairs Conservation Communications and information technology
Sue Moroney	Labour	3	Economic development Agriculture Transport

Su'a William Sio	Labour	3	Education Energy Labour
Hon. Tariana Turia	Maori	3	Environment ACC Conservation
Darien Fenton	Labour	4	Labour (2) ACC (2)
Jeannette Fitzsimons	Green	4	Environment (2) Climate change issues Agriculture
Te Ururoa Flavell	Maori	4	Treaty of Waitangi negotiations (2) Tertiary education Veterans' affairs
Rodney Hide	ACT New Zealand	4	Climate change issues Finance
Hon. Dr. Pita Sharples	Maori	4	Treaty of Waitangi negotiations (2) Maori affairs Education
H V Ross Robertson	Labour	5	Transport Research, science and technology Customs Commerce Climate change issues
Peter Brown	NZ First	6	Immigration Energy Climate change issues Transport (3)
Dr. Ashraf Choundhary	Labour	6	Agriculture (2) Tertiary education (2) Education (2)
Russell Fairbrother	Labour	6	Social development and employment (4) Community and voluntary sector Health
Lynne Pillay	Labour	6	Housing (3) Social development and employment Justice (2)
Hon. Paul Swain	Labour	6	Commerce (2) Finance (2) Building and construction ACC
Hon. Dr. Nick Smith	National	15	Building and construction (2) Environment (2) Climate change issues (8) Conservation (2) Energy
John Key	National	18	Migration (2) Political parties Prisons Public service Economy Mortgage rates

			Household incomes Finance Government departments Justice and police Referendum Transport Foreign affairs (3) Debts decrease Donations
Hon. Bill English	National	19	Finance (6) Justice (10) Immigration Transport State services

Table 3: List of New Zealand MPs having versatile areas of interest.

To the third group belong the Members who seldom ask main questions and those MPs who do not take part in the discussions. Thus, the table below shows the number of people who have been completely inactive throughout the year, i.e. they did not ask or answer any main or supplementary questions, raise points of order or even made any comments. The number of such MPs is significantly high both in New Zealand and Australia, especially among the Opposition members. In both Houses they make up almost 50% of the total number of Opposition Members.

One might think that the Members of the Opposition would be more active before a general election as at this time the interest of the public towards the parliamentary business grows and people tend to watch the parliamentary proceedings more, but surprisingly half of the Members do not participate in the discussions.

Robert Salmond, who investigated accountability mechanisms during Question Time in various Parliaments (2007) believes, that "Opposition parties have only a limited supply of questions to ask during Question Time, in both New Zealand and Australia. Those speaking slots are usually distributed by a party's leadership to its members. In election year, there is increased media focus on politics generally, and the clashes at Question Time in particular. This is because they often act as a preview of, or proxy for, the election campaign itself. Indeed, Question Time is the only parliamentary forum where Opposition politicians also get to set the agenda, and force government Ministers to address their preferred issues" (Personal Communication, 2011).

	Labour (Govt)	**National (Opp)**	**NZ First**	**United Future**	**NZ Green**	**NZ Maori**	**Progressive**	**Independent**
Men	4 out of 31	16 out of 34	0 out of 6	0 out of 1	0 out of 3	0 out of 3	0 out of 1	0 out of 2
Women	1 out of 19	7 out of 13	0 out of 1	0 out of 1	0 out of 4	0 out of 1	0 out of 0	0 out of 0
Total	5 out of 50	23 out of 47	0 out of 7	0 out of 2	0 out of 7	0 out of 4	0 out of 1	0 out of 2
Percentage	**10%**	**48.9%**	**0%**	**0%**	**0%**	**0%**	**0%**	**0%**

Table 4: Inactivity of MPs in the New Zealand House of Representatives in 2008.

	Liberal Party (Govt)	**Labor Party (Opp)**	**National Party**	**Country Liberal**	**Independent**

				Party	
Men	14 out of 61	15 out of 37	2 out of 10	0 out of 1	1 out of 4
Women	5 out of 15	12 out of 20	1 out of 2	0 out of 0	0 out of 0
Total	19 out of 76	27 out of 57	3 out of 12	0 out of 1	1 out of 4
Percentage	**25%**	**47.3%**	**25%**	**0%**	**0%**

Table 5: Inactivity of MPs in the Australian Federal House of Representatives in 2007.

Sometimes questions may be asked in Maori. In this case the translation into English is provided for the MPs, who do not understand Maori. Salmond (1975: 45) believes, that "oratory among the Maori of New Zealand has always been a main avenue for the achievement and exercise of power" so usually these questions would be asked by the Maori Party representatives on the topic of Maori affairs, e.g.:

> **TE URUROA FLAVELL:** *He aha tā Ngāti Whāoa i roto i te Tikanga Whakaaetanga i hainatia i ngā wiki e rua kua hipa i waenganui i te Karauna me ngā kāhui māngai, e mōhiotia nei, ko te Kotahitanga ā-iwi i Te Puku o Te Ika-a-Māui? [What involvement has Ngāti Whāoa had in the terms of agreement signed 2 weeks ago between the Crown and representatives of the iwi group known as the Central North Island Collective?]* (NZ Hansard, Question 06, 05.03.2008).

5.1.2. Australia

The Australian Speaker of the House usually calls for the first main question by saying *"Questions. Are there any questions? The Honourable Leader of the*

Opposition". The Speaker is supposed to keep track of the Members who have had their turn in asking questions so that each party has fair opportunities. However, as in the New Zealand Parliament, if the Leader of the Opposition has any questions, he gets the first call.

The next MP wishing to ask a question simply rises from their seat thus indicating to the Speaker that they have a question to ask. The Speaker then announces the next main question simply by stating the next MPs electorate seat, e.g. *"The Honourable Member for Greenway".* The Member thanks the Speaker and then comes to the question.

> **MR. SPEAKER:** *The Honourable Member for Greenway*.
>
> **LOUISE MARCUS:** *Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is addressed to the Prime Minister. "Would the Prime Minister inform the House how strong and disciplined economic management at the national level contributes to the management of Australian household budgets?"*

The Hansard record for this is as follows:

> **LOUISE MARKUS** (2.03 pm)—*My question is addressed to the Prime Minister. Would the Prime Minister inform the House how strong and disciplined economic management at the national level contributes to the management of Australian household budgets?* (Australian Hansard, Question 2, 08.08.2007)

What distinguishes the Australian main questions from those asked in the New Zealand House is the fact that quite often MPs get only one chance to attack the Minister answering the question and they simply can not afford asking general questions. Thus, their questions are strictly to the point and the MPs asking the main questions try to use all possible methods at hand to get the desired results: "[s]ince Members of Parliament […] only have the opportunity to ask one question, with only rare opportunity for follow-up questions, supplementary questions, or clarificatory comments, […] they must carefully construct their questions for maximum impact in terms of its propositional ramification" (J. Wilson, 1990: 158), e.g.:

> **ANTHONY ALBANESE** (2.28 pm)—*My question is to the Prime Minister. Can the Prime Minister confirm that, three years after he announced the $50 million metropolitan broadband black spots program, only $200,000 has been spent on broadband but $1.3 million has been spent on the bureaucrats administering the program? Can the Prime Minister confirm that the remaining $48 million left in this program has now been rebadged as the government's recently announced Broadband Guarantee? <u>Prime Minister, what is the point of announcing all these programs if none of the money is actually spent</u>?* (Australian Hansard, Question 5, 21.03.2007)

Or another example:

Mr. RUDD (2.06 pm)—*Mr. Speaker, my question is again to the Prime Minister. I refer to Labor's plan for the creation of a national curriculum board to deliver a common national curriculum in English, history, maths and science. Prime Minister, why, after years and years of talk, has the government failed to act to deliver national curriculum for Australia's schoolchildren?* (Australian Hansard, Question 3, 28.02.2007)

And finally:

Ms GILLARD (3.06 pm)—*My question is to the Prime Minister. I can see he is happy about that. I refer the Prime Minister to his confirmation that in December last year his office instructed Senator Santoro to omit the phrase 'share trading' from his register of interests. Did Senator Santoro or the Prime Minister's office initiate the discussion about the description of Senator Santoro's share activity?* (Australian Hansard, Question 15, 21.03.2007)

The Government Members use other techniques, praising in particular, to support their Ministers, e.g.:

Mr. RICHARDSON (2.07 pm)—*My question is addressed to the Treasurer, who is part of the best team ever. Would the Treasurer inform the House of the results of today's consumer sentiment survey? What does this indicate about the state of the Australian economy, and how does this compare to other economies?* (Australian Hansard, Question 4, 12.09.2007)

Mr. RICHARDSON (2.42 pm)—*My question is addressed to the very good Minister for Health and Ageing. Would the minister outline to the House recent government improvements to Medicare, including new mental health initiatives? Is the minister aware of any alternative policies? What is the government's response?* (Australian Hansard, Question 12, 28.02.2007)

Hon. PETER McGAURAN: *I thank the member for Hinkler for his question. I am sure my colleagues will understand if I single out the member for Hinkler for special praise for the role he has played over many years in contributing to the formulation of the government's broadband policy, released with such fanfare to largely, if not entirely, uncritical acclaim throughout the nation* (Australian Hansard, Question 16, 20.06.2007).

As Australian MPs try to include as much detail in their questions, the latter tend to be quite long. The average number of words in a main question is 57.2 which is more than two times higher than an average question asked in the New Zealand House (25.7 words). The biggest number of words in the main question asked in the Australian Parliament is 248. The question was asked by Tony Windsor, Liberal Party member and it was addressed to the Prime Minister. The shortest question asked by the Australian Liberal Party Member Stuart Henry had 22 words. Questions under 20 words only occurred when MPs asking questions were interrupted and had to continue after the interjection, whereas in the New Zealand Parliament the longest question is 82 words long (question asked by Hon. Dr. Wayne Mapp, National Party, of Hon. Phil Goff) and there

were several questions, each 8 words long. Those can be considered the shortest questions asked in the New Zealand Chamber (the questions shorter than 8 words were incomplete due to the interruptions).

It is important to notice that about 33.1% (101 out of 305) of questions on Wednesday Question Time sessions in 2007 in the Australian Federal Parliament were addressed to the Prime Minister John Howard and covered different areas of his expertise. Then comes the Treasurer, Hon. Peter Costello, with 42 out of 305 questions (13.8%), followed by Hon. Joe Hockey, Minister for Human Services and Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, who was asked 22 main questions in 2007 (7.2% out of the total number of main questions). Another person who was asked an impressive number of main questions was the Speaker of the House, Hon. David Hawker. He was asked 24 main questions (7.87% of total number of main questions). This is another distinguishing feature of the Australian Question Time sessions from those in New Zealand, where the MPs can not ask questions of the Speaker at the end of the session but are supposed to submit them in writing (McGee, 2005: 559). The content of questions asked in the Australian Parliament was variable. As in the New Zealand Parliament there were a number of MPs who addressed their questions to particular Ministers (see Table 6) and those whose questions covered various spheres of parliamentary business (see Table 7).

MP's Name	Political Party	No. of Questions asked in 2008	Area of interest (no. of questions asked)
Peter Andren	Independent	3	Energy (3)
Hon. Bronwyn Bishop	Liberal	3	Speaker's ruling (2)
Kay Hull	National	3	Transport (2)
Louise Markus	Liberal	3	Economy (2)
Hon. Roger Price	Labor	3	Liberal party (2)
Jason Wood	Liberal	3	Workplace relations (2)
Hon. Arch Bevis	Labor	4	Speaker's ruling (4)
Hon. Simon Crean	Labor	4	Equine Influenza (4)
Michael Keenan	Liberal	4	Economy (3)
Peter Garrett	Labor	5	Climate change (3) Energy (2)
Stephen Smith	Labor	5	Education (4)
Hon. Bob McMullan	Labor	6	Liberal party (4)

Table 6: List of Australian MPs having a particular area of interest.

MP's Name	Political Party	No. of Questions asked in 2008	Area of interest (no. of questions asked)
Russell Broadbent	Liberal	3	Parliamentary zone Workplace relations Economy
Steven Ciobo	Liberal	3	Budget 2007-08 Economy Water
Michael Ferguson	Liberal	3	Education Health Transport
Hon. Gary Hardgrave	Liberal	3	Budget 2007-08 Transport Schools
Hon. Jackie Kelly	Liberal	3	Budget 2007-08 Workplace relations Trade unions
Dr. Andrew Laming	Liberal	3	Foreign affairs Education Taxation
Ken Ticehurst	Liberal	3	Climate change Workplace relations School
Dave Tollner	Country Liberal	3	Budget 2007-08 Indigenous affairs Superannuation
Phillip Barresi	Liberal	4	Workplace relations Building and construction industry Interest rates Income tax

Kerry Bartlett	Liberal	4	Health Budget 2007-08 Skills shortage Housing
Stewart McArthur	Liberal	4	Economy Transport Workplace relations Education
Paul Neville	National	4	Budget 2007-08 State governments Broadband Economy
Hon. Danna Vale	Liberal	4	Workplace relations Energy Climate change Economy
David Fawcett	Liberal	5	Superannuation Economy Health Royal Australian Navy Mortgages
Cameron Thompson	Liberal	5	Economy Workplace relations (2) Employment Transport
Stuart Henry	Liberal	6	Climate change Superannuation Economy Workplace relations (3)
Hon. Andrew Southcott	Liberal	6	Foreign affairs (2) Economy Mr. David Hicks Climate change Water
Ross Vasta	Liberal	6	Work for the Dole Transport Taxation Superannuation Workplace relations Schools
Mark Baker	Liberal	7	Housing Small businesses Budget 2007-08 Agriculture Hospitals (3)
Kym Richardson	Liberal	7	Health Education Employment (2) Workplace relations Economy (2)
Lindsay Tanner	Labor	9	Speaker’s ruling (3) Future fund (4) Broadband Interest rates

Anthony Albanese	Labor	11	Speaker's ruling (5) Broadband Federal elections Liberal party (2) Ministerial staff (2)
Julia Gillard	Labor	13	Workplace relations (6) Ministerial responsibility (3) Industrial relations Defence (3)
Wayne Swan	Labor	18	Water Interest rates Climate change (2) Budget 2007-08 (3) Economy (2) Housing affordability Treasurer (5) Liberal party (3)
Kevin Rudd	Labor	51	Climate change (9) Foreign affairs (6) Productivity Education (3) Energy (3) Roads Budget 2007-08 (5) Workplace relations Advertising campaigns (3) Older Australians Liberal party (7) Economy Interest rates (5) Treasurer (4) Schools

Table 7: List of Australian MPs having versatile areas of interest.

Apparently, Australian MPs do not show consistent interest in particular topics as much as New Zealand MPs do. This can be explained by the unprepared nature of questions and new topics arising in the course of Question Time sessions where more MPs want to take part. When MPs do show consistent interest to a particular topic, this often happens during one session when the MPs asking questions think that the Minister did not give a full answer to their question, and they ask more main questions to get more details. Normally an

MP will use the following introductory phrases to ask a main question related to the previous question:

Further to my question to the [Minister]…

I refer to the [Minister's] *response about…*

My question is a follow-up to the [Minister's] *last answer…*

My question is again [addressed (1) / directed (1)] to the [Minister]*… (8).*

My question is again to the [Minister]*, on… (4).*

My question is again to the [Minister]*. I refer to his previous statement (1) / [last] answer (7) / fact (1) / claim (1) that... (7) / when he said… (3).*

My question is again to the [Minister] *and refers to his answer to the previous question (2).*

My question is again to the [Minister]*, and I refer to…*

My question is again to the [Minister]*, and it concerns…*

My question again is to the [Minister]*. I refer to the* [Minister's] *answer before concerning the…*

My question is to the [Minister]*. I refer the* [Minister] *to his previous answer when he claimed that…*

My question is to the [Minister]*. I refer to the* [Minister's] *last answer where he…*

My question is to the [Minister]*. I refer him to the* [Minister's] *claim that…*

My question is to the [Minister] *and refers to his last answer.*

My question is to the [Minister] *and it refers to his answer to the previous question on…*

My question is to the [Minister]*. It follows on from the* [Minister's] *claim in his previous answer that…*

My question is to the [Minister]*. I refer to the* [Minister's] *answer to the previous question on…*

My question is again to the [Minister]. *I refer to the* [Minister's] *remarkable comments on…*

My question is to the [Minister] *and it follows the extraordinary answer given just now by the* [Minister].

My question again is to the [Minister]. *It refers to my earlier question where I asked the* [Minister] *to confirm…*

My question is again to the [Minister]. *It refers to my two previous questions of the* [Minister] *(2). It relates to…*

My question is to the [Minister] *and follows on from his answer to a previous question.*

My question again is to the [Minister] *and follows his failure to answer the previous question.*

My question again is to the [Minister]. *Why can't the* [Minister] *answer a direct question with a direct answer about…*

I have a question <u>*to you*</u>*, Mr. Speaker, and I refer to previous questions to you that indicate that…* (Note: 'You' address is only possible to the Speaker).

Further to that issue, I have a question <u>*to you*</u> *and I refer to...* (Another question to the Speaker).

5.2. Answering main questions

5.2.1. New Zealand

When an MP finishes asking their main question, the Speaker of the House announces the Minister's name thus signalling that the Minister has the call.

When answering main questions, the New Zealand Ministers stand up from their seats and quite often thank the Speaker.

Because most of the main questions tend to be very general, the answers to the main questions are usually not long. The average number of words in the main answers is 61.7. The longest answer given in 2008 in the New Zealand House of Representatives was 369 words long. It was given by Hon. David Cunliffe, the Minister of Health. Rt. Hon. Helen Clark, among a few others, gave the shortest possible answers consisting of one word only, usually '*Yes*' or '*No*'. Thus, in 2008 out of 19 main answers given by her, 6 answers were one word long – '*Yes*'.

The Minister of Finance, Hon. Dr. Michal Cullen answered the biggest number of main questions in 2008 – 26. Three Ministers out of 27 were asked no main questions.

5.2.2. Australia

The situation with the main answers in the Australian Federal House of Representatives is quite different from that in New Zealand. First of all, when inviting a Minister to answer the question, the Speaker of the House does not

call their name but names the electorate or portfolio, e.g. "*The Honourable Member for Curtin*" or "*The Honourable Treasurer*". The Minister who has got a call is supposed then to approach the despatch box and the microphone placed on the central table in the Chamber to answer the question.

With the unprepared nature of questions in the Australian House the Ministers necessarily educate themselves about their departments in preparing to put on a good performance and each Minister has to "prepare himself across the whole range of his department's interests and to guess as how any topical issue might cut across his territory" (D. Butler, 1974: 31). Their answers must be relevant to the question asked but as there is no time limit on the answers, it is not difficult for a Minister to make almost any answer relevant (Solomon, 1986: 30). Thus, the Ministers have to be able to anticipate the questions and be well-prepared with their answers as a Minister's inability or refusal to answer a question is regarded by the Opposition as a defeat. Besides, "a minister unable to answer a question or squirming before difficult questions [...] makes good television" (Norton, 1993: 109).

According to Solomon's observation (1986: 30), "it is only rarely that an Opposition question finds a Minister completely unprepared, and it is even more rare that a Minister who has not anticipated a particular question is unable to deal satisfactorily with it". To avoid awkward situations the Ministers hold pre-Question Time briefings with the Members of their party. The Opposition

Leader holds an Opposition equivalent of a Minister's pre-Question Time briefing on each sitting day. He and his senior Opposition leaders, together with their senior staff, decide what the major thrust of the Opposition's questions should be for that day, and on any other parliamentary tactics (Solomon, 1986: 94). So, Question Time in the Australian Parliament turns into a very well-orchestrated performance where "the members of each team tend to maintain the line that they are what they claim to be: they tend to stay in character" (Goffman, 1980: 166).

A peculiar feature of the main answers in the Australian Parliament is the fact that the Ministers answering the questions thank the Members of their own party for the questions. This does not happen though when the questions are asked by the Opposition MPs, e.g.:

a) A question from the Government Member for Hughes, Hon. Donna Vale:

> **Hon. JOE HOCKEY:** *I thank the member for Hughes for her question and note that the unemployment rate in the great electorate of Hughes is now down to 3.1 per cent. Once upon a time they said five per cent was full employment, but in the electorate of Hughes it is 3.1 per cent. It would not have happened under David Hill* (Australian Hansard, Question 10, 14.02.2007).

b) A question from the Opposition Member for Griffith, Kevin Rudd:

> **Hon. JOHN HOWARD:** *No, I will not formally repudiate it. People make different statements about different things over a period of time. I seem to remember the Leader of the Opposition a little under two years ago saying that he was not experienced enough to be the leader of the Labor Party. He now thinks that he is experienced enough to be Prime Minister* (Australian Hansard, Question 07, 07.02.2007).

As has been mentioned before, the answers tend to be quite long as there are no restrictions on the length of answers, so the Australian Ministers take their time with the answers. The average number of words in an answer is 222.6, which is 3.69 times more than in the New Zealand Parliament.

Notice should be taken of the fact that main answers in the Australian Parliament are finite sources of information on the question. No further details will be provided as is the case with New Zealand supplementary questions. So this is 'the time' for other MPs to interject and comment on what is being said. Thus, during 2007 there were 186 interruptions in 305 main answers, whereas in the New Zealand House there were only 2.

The Minister who answered the biggest number of main questions was the Prime Minister Hon. John Howard. He answered 101 main questions. He was

also the most interrupted speaker as his answers were interrupted 52 times. Three Ministers out of 23 answered no questions in 2007.

The longest uninterrupted answer was 1013 words long, given by Hon. Peter Costello, the Treasurer. Hon. Mal Brough, the Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, managed to give an even longer answer after being interrupted. It was 1104 words long. No Minister gave a one-word answer. The shortest answer had 4 words (*'Of course I do')* and was also given by Hon. Peter Costello, the Treasurer.

5.3. Asking supplementary questions

5.3.1. New Zealand

As has been mentioned above, the purpose of supplementary questions in the New Zealand House is to get more information or score political points, which it is not possible to do when asking main questions as when submitted they get thoroughly checked to avoid arguments. De Ayala (2001: 150) believes, that "it is relatively easy to table a parliamentarily acceptable question. The difficult task, for any MP wishing to surprise the Government, is to formulate an initial question cleverly enough to lead the Minister to the topic area where s/he wants to make the supplementary". Thus, supplementary questions aim to cause arguments and, taking into the account their unprepared nature, the questioner

can catch the Ministers off guard. This is how the effect of unexpectedness is achieved. The latter is an important feature of Question Time. Solomon (1986: 6) thinks, that "some of what happens in Parliament really is meant to provide something like a staged confrontation" because "extreme formality and politeness of the procedures removes one's choice of refusing unwelcome requests" (Bloch, 1975: 10). Thus, if a main question is very general, the Minister can only guess what supplementary questions will follow. And they do follow. The statistics shows that there always is at least one supplementary question and there may be up to 24 supplementaries within one question set. Both questions and answers should be succinct and to the point.

The average number of supplementary questions in main questions asked by the Government Members is 2.74 whereas when a main question is asked by an Opposition Member the average number of supplementaries that follow is 6.9.

To ask a supplementary, Members need to indicate their intention by standing up from their seats. The Member who asked the main question gets priority in asking supplementaries. To allow an MP to start asking their supplementary question the Speaker normally says "*Supplementary question. The Hon. ...*". Although it is obvious that the supplementary question will be addressed to the same Minister, nevertheless, the MPs are required to repeat this for the sake of those who listen to the proceedings on the radio, e.g.

MADAM SPEAKER: *Supplementary question. The Honourable Tony Ryall.*

Hon. TONY RYALL: *To the Minister. Why does the review panel make no judgment on the role of Hawke's Bay District Health Board management in providing confidential tender documents to Mr. Hausmann before any other potential bidder, when the Office of the Controller and Auditor-General has said that managing conflicts of interest is also a responsibility of management?* (NZ Hansard, Question 6, Supplementary question 1, 19.03.2008)

The total number of supplementary questions asked in the New Zealand Parliament in 2008 was 1227 including 43 interrupted questions, when the speaker had to start asking their question again. The average number of words in supplementary questions is 52.8. This is twice as long as an average main question (25.7 words).

The format of supplementary questions is similar to the main questions. The questions are formal and those asking them are required to observe the rules outlined in Standing Orders. However, during heated discussions breaches of rules happen quite often when MPs get attacked as politicians and public representatives, that is, in their public face. In De Ayala's opinion (2001: 148), "if MPs' public face were not vulnerable, Question Time would be uninteresting". The most common instances of rule breaking include:

- Comments or interjections with critical remarks or even swear words and calling other Members names, e.g.

This is ridiculous. (NZ Hansard, Question 10, 16.04.2008)

Rubbish! (NZ Hansard, Question 2, 14.05.2008)

We want some honest answers. (NZ Hansard, Question 2, 14.05.2008)

Dickhead! (NZ Hansard, Question 5, 02.04.2008)

What, a doozy like Tau? (NZ Hansard, Question 10, 16.04.2008)

- Using 'you' instead of the third person pronouns, e.g.

You are the one who has spent more time in front of judges than I have. (NZ Hansard, Question 3, 20.02.2008)

- If it is too noisy in the Chamber and the Speaker has to interrupt the process by calling out '*Order*' this is seldom reflected in the Hansard records and can only be observed when watching the proceedings live or recorded.

5.3.2. Australia

In the Australian Parliament, supplementary questions are not allowed. The thirteen supplementary questions that this research has found are basically interruptions. They contain comments or short questions which the Minister

answering the main questions finds it important to respond to. The comments that received no answers from the Ministers are referred to as 'Comments'. These interruptions are unauthorised by the Speaker because in the Australian Parliament to get a call an MP has to approach the central table and to use the microphone. This does not happen with comments or interjections. Rarely the Speaker ignores interjections, and this is when the Minister gets an opportunity to respond.

The thirteen supplementary questions asked in 2008 were quite short. The longest was 15 words long with the average length of only 6 words. This shows that MPs are in a hurry to ask their questions and they try to avoid the Speaker's ruling against them. Carbó (1992: 32) believes, that "this is an obvious fact: since there is no opportunity for an 'acceptable' access to a speech-turn, brevity is a prerequisite that they always satisfy". As can be seen from the questions below, in most cases the MPs are seeking more information and there is no place or time for mockery in these questions. The pronoun 'you' is used in the supplementaries rather often as this form of address also helps to save time for utterance production.

What's <u>your</u> exit strategy? (Australian Hansard, Question 2, 14.02.2007)

What's their pay rates? (Australian Hansard, Question 17, 28.02.2007)

Where are the statistics? (Australian Hansard, Question 17, 28.02.2007)

Broadband is irrelevant? (Australian Hansard, Question 3, 21.03.2007)

Are you saying that that is analogous? (Australian Hansard, Question 1, 23.05.2007)

Do you mean you don't know? (Australian Hansard, Question 5, 23.05.2007)

This is the salient point: what role have the state governments played in this process? (Australian Hansard, Question 6, 23.05.2007)

Are you sure it's the biggest port? (Australian Hansard, Question 8, 30.05.2007)

What about Dean Mighell? (Australian Hansard, Question 12, 30.05.2007)

When did you make that up? (Australian Hansard, Question 16, 30.05.2007)

What about the children overboard? (Australian Hansard, Question 9, 08.08.2007)

Do you have any objections? (Australian Hansard, Question 17, 08.08.2007)

Oh, so you don't stand by yesterday's answer? (Australian Hansard, Question 5, 15.08.2007)

The biggest number of supplementary questions following one main question was 2, both asked by Julia Gillard, Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

5.4. Answering supplementary questions

5.4.1. New Zealand

As is the case with all other types of utterance, the Speaker of the House names the Minister who is to answer the supplementary question. According to the rules outlined in Standing Orders, the answers should be addressed to the

Speaker, and while speaking the Ministers tend to repeat 'Madam Speaker' when they want to attract the listeners' attention to what they are saying or when the noise in the House is too loud and the Speaker is required to act.

For example, Rt. Hon. Helen Clark used this technique more often than other MPs in 2008. Her intonation was quite demanding and the tone of her voice went up every time she addressed Madam Speaker. However, the Hansard records do not indicate this. In the transcript below all the words which are not included in Hansard are underlined:

> **Rt. Hon. HELEN CLARK:** *Madam Speaker…*
>
> **Madam SPEAKER:** *The Rt. Hon. Helen Clark.*
>
> **Rt. Hon. HELEN CLARK:** *Madam Speaker, on the contrary, over a long period of time I have found them very supportive. Madam Speaker…, Madam Speaker, I find it very interesting that the Leader of the Opposition is now running around saying he wants a referendum so that he can disguise from conservatives the fact that he voted for the child discipline bill in the first place—something he would like them to forget.* (NZ Hansard, Question 1, Supplementary question 4, 25.06.2008)

The supplementary answers in the New Zealand Parliament are relatively short. The average number of words is 65.8. The longest answer given in 2008 was 227 words long and the shortest consisted of one word only.

5.4.2. Australia

Supplementary answers in the Australian Federal Parliament should probably be treated as interrupted main answers. However, taking into account the fact that some interruptions contain meaningful questions that lead to the continuation of Ministers' answers allows us to treat them as unauthorised supplementaries.

There were 17 supplementary answers in 2007 including interrupted answers. Compared to supplementary answers in the New Zealand Parliament they were quite long. The average number of words was 236.9 words which is 3.6 times longer than New Zealand supplementaries. The longest question was 832 words long and the shortest – 15. No single word supplementaries were given in 2007 in Australia as Ministers tended to use the opportunity to dwell on the topic as long as possible.

Interruptions take place quite often in the course of supplementary answers; however, neither the Speaker nor Members try to take any measures to stop further discussions which contradict the rules of the House. In Butler's opinion (1974: 21), "In the federal parliament, the government allows the opposition remarkable freedom to move the suspension of Standing Orders and to introduce censure motions. It accepts the obligation to answer questions and in

committees and elsewhere safeguards opportunities for its errors to be exposed".

5.5. Raising points of order

5.5.1. New Zealand

Points of order are the most spectacular part of Question Time because although "the Chambers of [...] Parliament are largely modelled on those of the Palace of Westminster; sometimes the language and behaviour and conduct of the Members is more suggestive of the Colosseum, or the 'outer' at a football game" (Solomon, 1986: 57). Once a discussion gets heated, a considerable number of different points of order will be raised as a result of MPs' misconduct and desire to score the points. The average number of points of order in a question is 0.9. That means that there were no points of order raised in 137 out of 228 main questions. However, I have managed to register a question containing ten points of order in 2008 and two questions with nine points of order.

If Members want to raise a point of order, they are supposed to stand up to attract the Speaker's attention. Then the Speaker announces the point of order by saying "*Point of Order. Jeannette Fitzsimons*". Every Point of Order invariably starts with words: "*I raise a point of order, Madam Speaker*" or

occasionally "*[Speaking] to the point of order*" in case when a Member was interrupted or further clarification is necessary.

The main purpose of points of order is to interrupt the business of the House because the breach of rules is purported to have taken place. However, some MPs may use this device for other purposes as well. I have managed to identify the following reasons for raising points of order in the New Zealand House of Representatives:

1. When an MP believes, that the question was not answered or the question or answer was not relevant:

> **Hon. JEANNETTE FITZSIMONS**: *I raise a point of order, Madam Speaker. My question asked specifically which conclusions the Minister was referring to, <u>and he has not answered that at all</u>* (NZ Hansard, Question 3, 13.02.2008).

> **Hon. NICK SMITH:** *I raise a point of order, Madam Speaker. My question was: "Why did the Government, if its policy was to produce a 5-yearly report, reject the recommendation of the Ministry for the Environment in 2002 not to produce a 5-yearly report?" <u>The answer I got from the Minister was totally irrelevant to that</u>* (NZ Hansard, Question 3, 13.02.2008).

An interesting conversation may take place in the cases when the Speaker believes, that the question was addressed but the questioner disagrees with this:

> **Hon. RODNEY HIDE:** *I raise a point of order, Madam Speaker. The specific question was—and this is important for accountability—who is responsible for honouring that promise. The Minister has accepted that in other places, too, the promise has not been kept. Well, whose fault is it?*
>
> **Madam SPEAKER**: *I think the Minister did actually address that part of the question.*
>
> **Hon. RODNEY HIDE:** *I raise a point of order, Madam Speaker. If the Minister has answered that part, could you share with the House who is responsible?*
>
> **Madam SPEAKER:** *I am sorry but the Minister has responded to the question* (NZ Hansard, Question 8, 13.02.2008).

The Speaker put the end to this conversation quite firmly because, first of all, the Questions to the Speaker are not allowed in the New Zealand Parliament, and secondly, the Speaker had to adhere to her previous ruling where she had declared that the question had been answered because, in Goffman's view (1980: 28), "when an individual plays a part he implicitly requests his observers to take seriously the impression that is fostered before them. They are asked to believe, that the character they see actually possesses the attributes he appears to possess, that the task he performs will have consequences that are implicitly claimed for, and that, in general, matters are what they appear to be".

If one thinks about the Speaker's role in the House, they may come to a conclusion that the Speaker performs more duties than any other Member. She

has to be present in the House daily no matter what happens because there may be no House sittings without the Chair. Besides, she has to listen to the content of questions and answers in order to determine whether they are relevant, whether there is a breach of rules and also to maintain order in the House. All the other Members can listen and take part in Question Time selectively depending on their area of interest or expertise. Moreover, they may deliberately break the rules in order to show their political opponents in an unfavourable light: "Perhaps the most common drift of undercurrent communication is for each team subtly to put itself in a favourable light and subtly to put the other team in an unfavourable one, often under the cover of verbal courtesies and compliments which point in the other direction" (Goffman, 1980: 187).

In many cases Hon. Margaret Wilson, the Speaker of the House, would respond to such a point of order by asking a Minister to add to their answer or to clarify their point of view:

> **Hon. GORDON COPELAND:** *I raise a point of order, Madam Speaker. The principal question also asked how the cull was to be carried out. <u>The Minister did not address that part of the question</u>.*
>
> **Madam SPEAKER:** *<u>Does the Minister wish to add to her answer?</u>* (NZ Hansard, Question 4, 05.03.2008)

On some occasions, however, the Speaker would not allow any further clarification from the Minister as this would be a breach of rules, e.g.:

> **PHIL HEATLEY:** *I raise a point of order, Madam Speaker. I asked very specifically whether the Minister would concur with Pat Snedden's statement that these first-home-buyer homes will cost $350,000 and those first-home buyers will have to be earning $70,000 a year. Does she concur with Pat Snedden, the chairman of Housing New Zealand Corporation, that people will have to be earning that sort of money for these first-home-buyer homes?*
>
> **Madam SPEAKER:** *As the member knows, <u>you cannot ask for a yes or no answer</u>. <u>The Minister did, in fact, address the question</u>* (NZ Hansard, Question 11, 13.02.2008).

2. To point out to the Speaker that the breach of rules has taken place or the utterance was not consistent with the Standing Orders, e.g.:

> **RODNEY HIDE:** *I raise a point of order, Madam Speaker. <u>It is against the Standing Orders to suggest that a member lacks courage</u>, and I think when that is given as the answer to a supplementary question, it certainly cannot be regarded as addressing the question* (NZ Hansard, Question 1, 05.03.2008).
>
> **GERRY BROWNLEE:** *Madam Speaker, <u>I take you to Standing Order 371(1)(b) and ask you for your ruling on that in relation to Mr. Peters' question, which makes</u>*

inference, offers imputation, and is, to say the very least, an ironical expression (NZ Hansard, Question 1, 12.03.2008).

3. To point out to the Speaker that it was too noisy in the House and a question or an answer was not heard by MPs, e.g.:

Hon. PETER DUNN: *Speaking to the point of order, Madam Speaker— The issue I want to raise is that I heard the Minister say that he was seeking to table an interesting—and then the hubbub ensued, and I do not know what the interest was about—* (NZ Hansard, Question 1, 05.03.2008).

Rt. Hon. WINSTON PETERS: *I raise a point of order, Madam Speaker. It is the duty of a party leader to control his or her troops. The National Party cannot go on with 12 or 13 people every day shouting out when they feel like it. Nobody in this Parliament—least of all me—objects to the rare humorous interjection, in particular, but this constant barrage is not what this Parliament is used to. Mr. Key has a duty to bring them into line* (NZ Hansard, Question 6, 12.03.2008).

4. To point out to the Speaker that the utterance was too long:

Rt. Hon. WINSTON PETERS: *I raise a point of order, Madam Speaker. Supplementary questions are not a time to make a speech. They should be terse and to the point, and I ask you to stop that member or ask him to abbreviate the question he has before him* (NZ Hansard, Question 7, 02.04.2008).

5. To point out to the Speaker that the question was outside the Minister's responsibility:

TAITO PHILLIP FIELD: *I raise a point of order, Madam Speaker. Perhaps you could clarify for me, Madam Speaker, in relation to the premise of the question: since when was the New Zealand Minister of Foreign Affairs responsible for the honesty and transparency of Governments in the Pacific?* (NZ Hansard, Question 5, 06.08.2008).

6. When unparliamentary language was used and a Member took offence; thus an apology and the remark withdrawal were required:

KEITH LOCKE: *I raise a point of order, Madam Speaker. I take offence at the sort of abuse directed at me by the Minister. Surely that is out of order in this House. I ask that he withdraw and apologise.* (NZ Hansard, Question 3, 19.03.2008).

Rt. Hon. WINSTON PETERS: *I raise a point of order, Madam Speaker. Bob Clarkson has just said something about himself that he should not say in this House. He used a word beginning with "d" that I cannot repeat. It was "d-head", and it well explains what he looks like in the mirror but he cannot say it in this House. I ask him to withdraw and apologise.* (NZ Hansard, Question 5, 02.04.2008).

7. To question the Speaker's ruling, e.g.:

> **Hon. BILL ENGLISH:** *I raise a point of order, Madam Speaker. I accept your ruling and I will leave the Chamber, but I just want to say that I think we are getting into a bit of difficulty here with the arbitrary selection of particular exchanges that have to be heard in silence. It was the method in this House under previous Speakers that questions were asked in silence, and answers were subject to reasonable interjection. That has now changed to the situation where barracking is allowed during questions. Every time I ask a question I get consistent barracking from a noisy group of members opposite. Madam Speaker, you have this practice now of intervening in particular exchanges. There was no particular tension to the exchange between me and Dr. Cullen. Other exchanges today have been so noisy that members could not hear the answer. My suggestion would be that we revert to a predictable and simple rule such as the one we used to have* (NZ Hansard, Question 7, 12.03.2008).

In the following example, Gerry Brownlee also subtly criticises the Speaker's ruling by pointing out that the Opposition side had been warned that the further interruptions would not be tolerated but in his opinion the warning did not refer to the Government members:

> **GERRY BROWNLEE**: *I raise a point of order, Madam Speaker. A short time ago you looked in the direction of the Opposition and said that if there were any further interjections while a question was being asked, then someone would be leaving the Chamber. I understand why numerous Ministers are upset and on the back foot, but they are repeatedly*—[Interruption] *Well, there you are! They are repeatedly*

interrupting. Normally, if such an interruption occurred, someone like Mr. Carter would be out of the Chamber (NZ Hansard, Question 3, 20.02.2008).

Gerry Brownlee takes every opportunity to point out the cases of unfair treatment of the Opposition:

GERRY BROWNLEE: *I raise a point of order, Madam Speaker. We cannot help but notice that this afternoon you have allowed Mr. Cunliffe to give an extensive description of what he is attempting to table. This appears to be quite new, because we notice that when we try to table stuff, almost the moment we utter the words "I seek leave to table …" the leave is put and no explanation is able to be given. So if this is new we would like to know that, and we would certainly like to have a consistent approach applied to us.*

Madam SPEAKER: *Thank you. I have warned members that long explanations, when they are tabling documents, are unnecessary. However, it is necessary to be able to identify the document, and that is what I listened for (NZ Hansard, Question 1, 05.03.2008).*

In the following example not only Rt. Hon. Winston Peters (NZ First) criticises the Speaker's ruling and talks in a haughty manner with her but also he utters a threat. Hon. Bill English (National) immediately interjects with another point of order and tries to take advantage of the situation. Darren Hughes (Labour) supports the Speaker and suggests getting on with the next question.

Rt. Hon. WINSTON PETERS: *I raise a point of order, Madam Speaker. With the greatest respect to you, I am not going to be told that I cannot ask a question wherein I put out there the facts known by every Member of Parliament—except one, apparently.*

Madam SPEAKER: *I did not say that, Mr. Peters.*

Rt. Hon. WINSTON PETERS: *Secondly, I will not tolerate everybody getting so sensitive that the moment members' feelings are hurt, whether or not that is justifiable, they can have you require the other member to withdraw and apologise. It is just wrong. It is not parliamentary. You will ruin the whole House if you carry on in that way, in view of these rulings. So I put it to you now—*

Madam SPEAKER: *Please be seated. I have made that point, but the fact remains that if someone does think there is a personal reflection, then there has to be a withdrawal and apology—that is the rule. Members may or may not agree with that, and they always have the opportunity to change it. I think those who are listening to this will make their own judgments on that, as well. Would the member please just put his question?*

Hon. BILL ENGLISH: *I raise a point of order, Madam Speaker. I think we just heard a threat from someone who is not just a member of the House but a senior member of the House. I know that on occasions when I have got a bit heated about things and have made that kind of approach to the Speaker, it has been dealt with pretty severely. In fact, I think on one occasion I might have been thrown out for it. I do not think there should be any exception for Mr. Peters. He said to you directly: "If you keep making those sorts of rulings, it will ruin the House." That is understood by everybody here as a threat of disorder because he disagrees with your rulings. That is unacceptable.*

Hon. DARREN HUGHES: *Speaking to the point of order—*

Madam SPEAKER: *Well, it is members' day, so you can take as long as you like.*

Hon. DARREN HUGHES: *Madam Speaker, Mr. English's point might have some validity if he had not just finished barking at you—as soon as he came back to the House—to fix this problem. We let that go because you had just made comments about our needing to get past sensitivities so that we can get back to the business, but it is a bit rich for the deputy leader of the National Party to interject on the Speaker and bark an order at her, then, as soon as another member says something he does not like, to take great objection to that. I think we should just get on with question No. 11.*

Madam SPEAKER*: And that is what I rule. We move on. Would the member please ask his question* (NZ Hansard, Question 10, 16.04.2008)?

8. To support another Member or to criticise them, e.g.:

a) Supporting another Member:

GERRY BROWNLEE: *I raise a point of order, Madam Speaker. The deputy leader of the National Party has, obviously, accepted your ruling and has left the House. I note, though, that immediately following question time we have the Budget Policy Statement. Mr. English is also our finance spokesperson. It would be appreciated if you could consider allowing his reintroduction to the House in time to participate in that debate* (NZ Hansard, Question 7, 12.03.2008).

b) Criticising another Member:

Hon. Dr. MICHAEL CULLEN: *Can I suggest that the member himself is now starting to become disorderly. He raised this point of order in exactly the same way he raised the point of order on exactly the same introduction to the answer previously given. To do that, therefore, is in fact questioning your previous ruling, Madam Speaker, that the Minister should be allowed to answer. This is a robust exchange, and if the member cannot take it he should not ask robust questions or try to give his Budget Policy Statement speech by way of a point of order* (NZ Hansard, Question 11, 12.03.2008).

In some points of order one can hear not only criticism but also threats and blackmailing:

Rt. Hon. WINSTON PETERS: *I raise a point of order, Madam Speaker. Mr. Hide made a comment, under the guise of a point of order, that I expected you to pull him up on. I want to give him a chance now to apologise to me in this House. If he does not, then I am going to tell the House the truth about him, which I have hitherto kept to myself. He can laugh and giggle; this is his last warning* (NZ Hansard, Question 02, 02.07.2008).

9. Other reasons include predominantly personal explanations which MPs are willing to make in the House even though they are aware that this can only be done if the leave is sought during Question Time, e.g.:

Hon. Dr. MICHAEL CULLEN: *I raise a point of order, Madam Speaker. If the member cared to consult the transcript of yesterday's Privileges Committee meeting, he would find me saying that as far as I am aware, nobody has called Mr. Glenn a liar. I certainly have not. I have once, in this House, in the open, in answer to a question, said he was confused as to whether his donation was to New Zealand First or to Mr. Peters. He was confused about that* (NZ Hansard, Question 02, 10.09.2008).

10. An impressive number of points of order were ruled out by the Speaker as being not points of order because those were not appropriate during Question Time. Bailey (2004: 16) believes, that raising points of order which in fact are not points of order "is a classical strategy to get the floor". These utterances can also be subdivided into several categories:

a) When a question is asked of the Speaker or another MP, e.g.:

Rt. Hon. WINSTON PETERS: *I raise a point of order, Madam Speaker. I ask Mr. Hide whether he will resign if I am right.*
Madam SPEAKER: *That is not a point of order* (NZ Hansard, Question 06, 09.04.2008).

GERRY BROWNLEE: *I raise a point of order, Madam Speaker. Was that the revelation of a secret agenda, which we shall see played on TV3 later this evening?*
Madam SPEAKER: *That is not a point of order* (NZ Hansard, Question 08, 06.08.2008).

b) When a personal or another explanation is given in the House:

Hon. DAVID CARTER: *I raise a point of order, Madam Speaker. For the sake of clarity, I just point out that I rang Mr. Alan Emerson, the author of that article. That is not a direct quote of mine, at all.*

Madam SPEAKER: *Well, as members know, that is not a point of order* (NZ Hansard, Question 09, 05.03.2008).

c) To express one's opinion.

In the following example the Member goes as far as accusing the other Member of telling lies which is absolutely unacceptable in the House. However, the Speaker only points out that this is not a point of order:

Dr. JONATHAN COLEMAN: *I raise a point of order, Madam Speaker. If the member makes an assertion like that, he should back it up with proof, because that is completely untrue and a lie.*

Madam SPEAKER: *That is not a point of order. There is a general debate coming up. I remind Ministers that their answers should be short, as should the questions. Are there any further supplementary questions?* (NZ Hansard, Question 01, 10.09.2008).

d) To make a comment:

Rt. Hon. WINSTON PETERS: *I raise a point of order, Madam Speaker. That, surely, cannot be it.*

Madam SPEAKER: *The member knows that that is not a point of order. If we have any more of those sorts of points of profile, I will consider them to be creating disorder in the House.*

RODNEY HIDE: *I raise a point of order, Madam Speaker. It might help the member if I tell him that that certainly is not it.*

Madam SPEAKER: *That is not a point of order. Please be seated. The same applies* (NZ Hansard, Question 02, 30.07.2008).

The table below shows the number and types of points of order raised by different parties. It is evident that the Opposition MPs raised the biggest number of points of order – 94 – which makes up almost 50% of the total number of points of order in 2008. Gerry Brownlee alone raised 42 out of 94 points of order raised by the National Party Members. Hon. Bill English was also quite active (18 points of order). Many of those points of order were of a disruptive nature when the questioners were not satisfied with the answers the Ministers gave and considered them irrelevant (37.2%); in the 14 cases (14.89% out of total number of points raised by National MPs) the utterances were found to be unparliamentary; in 11.7% and 10.6% of cases respectively National Party Members supported / criticized other MPs and questioned the Speaker's ruling. A considerable number of points of order (9 = 9.5%) were considered by the Speaker as being not points of order.

The next party actively raising points of order is surprisingly not Labour but New Zealand First with Rt. Hon. Winston Peters as the Party Leader, one of the most senior MPs and the next most active Member in raising points of order and creating disruption during Question Time. The total number of points of order raised by New Zealand First was 40 with 28 of them coming from Mr. Peters who criticized (mostly) / supported other MPs in 30% of instances. Similarly to the National Party, the NZ First Party MPs raised 9 (22.5%) points of order that in fact were points of debate / misrepresentation or just disruptions.

Third place is the Labour Party with 29 points of order raised in 2008. The most active Labour Party Member turned out to be the Leader of the House Hon. Dr. Michael Cullen. He raised 13 points of order. The Prime Minister Helen Clark raised only one point of order on the issue of breach of rules. This was the most popular reason for raising points of order among the Labour Party MPs (6 = 20.6%). The same number of points of order was raised to support or criticize other MPs.

All the other minor parties were far less active in raising points of order, and most of their points of order were on the issue of relevance of a question / answer.

The New Zealand Progressive Party was represented only by Hon. Jim Anderton in the New Zealand Parliament in 2008 and he raised no points of order.

	No. of points of order raised	**Irrelevant quest. / answ.**	**Breach of rules**	**Too noisy in the House**	**Remark withdrawal is required**	**The utterance is too long**	**Outside of ministerial responsibility**	**To question the Speaker's ruling**	**To support or criticize an MP**	**Other**	**Ruled out as being not a PoO**
Labour	**30**	1	6	1	3		3	2	6	4	4
National	**94**	35	14	4	6	1		10	11	4	9
NZ First	**40**	2	3	4	1	3		3	12	3	9
United Future	**6**	3		2				1			
Green	**10**	6			2					2	
Maori	**9**	7	1								1
NZ Progressive											
ACT NZ	**11**	5	2				1				3
Independent	**6**	5					1				
Total:	**206**	**64**	**26**	**11**	**12**	**4**	**5**	**16**	**29**	**13**	**26**

Table 8: Number and types of points of order raised by different parties in the New Zealand Parliament in 2008.

Daily proofs of Hansard are circulated to Members after each day's sitting, and Members can, within reason, amend the draft if they believe, that Hansard depicts something different from what they said or did in the Chamber. These days video cameras record the proceedings of the House. Nevertheless, the MPs are still allowed to amend Hansard records even if the TV screen shows the opposite. That is why an important issue of Hansard records being inconsistent with what actually happens in the Chamber was raised in one of the points of order by Ron Mark (NZ First):

> **RON MARK:** *I raise a point of order, Madam Speaker. This is a completely different issue. What I have noted from that exchange of points of order, particularly from the point of order taken by Gerry Brownlee, gives me cause for concern. We all know that when our Hansard comes around to us, we have the opportunity to check it for accuracy and veracity. We have a new element added to Parliament whereby we have video cameras and everything is recorded. It would concern New Zealand First greatly if in the actual recorded written Hansard Mr. English's comments were different from what the video showed him saying. I ask you as the Speaker which record stands supreme in recording evidence, because Mr. Brownlee's comments would lead some of us to fear that National will doctor the Hansard to ensure it reflects what Mr. Brownlee said, not what Mr. English said. We would want—sit down, Gerry.*
>
> **Madam SPEAKER:** *Be seated. That is a very disrespectful comment, Mr. Mark. If you would please just make your point of order very succinctly, then we can hear a response to it from Mr. Brownlee.*
>
> **RON MARK:** *The point is that that there is the possibility that we will end up with the situation where the video and the DVD show Mr. English saying precisely what my leader, Winston Peters, said he said and the written copy reflects what Gerry Brownlee claims he said, which is not accurate* (NZ Hansard, Question 06, 09.04.2008).

Also, at least two times in 2008 points of order were raised before the beginning of Question 1 of Question Time. There is no mention of those in the Hansard under the Question Time section, probably because they do not refer to any particular question. They can be found though on the Hansard page of the

Parliament website as separate entries detached from Question Time. They are recorded on video. The first one was raised by Hon. Winston Peters regarding the parliamentary press gallery and the access of media to the parliamentary complex (NZ Hansard, 02.04.2008. Retrieved from http://www.parliament.nz); the other one was raised by Gerry Brownlee in connection with overdue replies to written questions (NZ Hansard, 25.06.2008. Retrieved from http://www.parliament.nz).

5.5.2. Australia

The Question Time sessions in the Australian Parliament are very dynamic in nature and speakers at the microphone change quite quickly. Thus, when MPs wish to raise a point of order they are supposed to rise on their feet to attract the Speaker's attention. They are not required to come to the central table but can speak from their place, where the microphone will be turned on for them once the Speaker has given them permission to speak. He does that by naming the MPs by their electorate or portfolio, e.g. "*The honourable member for Mackellar*".

It is interesting to notice that Australian MPs use a lot of variations of the point of order initiation phrase "*I raise a point of order*" as compared to the New Zealand MPs. The most popular expression here is "*I rise on a point of order*".

It was used 46 times by different parties MPs in 2007. This makes perfect sense as the MPs perform the actual act of standing up on their feet to raise a point of order.

The other popular expression is "*I raise a point of order*". It was used 14 times. Quite often though, it is followed by a short description of the nature of the point of order, e.g. "*I raise a point of order on relevance*" or "*I raise a point of order under Standing Order 104*".

The other expressions used by MPs include the following:

On a point of order... (10)

I rose to make / raise a point of order... (3)

I have a point of order... (2)

A point of order on... (1)

My point of order is very simple... (1)

I am entitled to speak on a point of order... (1)

It is about the question that I am drawing the point of order... (1)

Points of order tend to be relatively short in the Australian Federal Parliament because in most instances MPs cite Standing Order numbers and there is no need to provide long explanations. This is both the rule of the Australian House and the demand of the Speaker who is very strict about the format of points of order and does not allow long speeches from the MPs raising them. The latter

should be succinct and to the point. The reason or the Standing Order number should be stated at once, otherwise MPs risk to lose their call and their point of order will be treated as a mere interruption. No debate is allowed. Thus, the average number of words in a point of order is 35.2, which is considerably shorter if compared to those in the New Zealand House (55.8 words) where MPs are listened to by the Speaker and allowed more freedom to express their ideas.

The average number of points of order per question set is also lower in Australia. It is only 0.3 whereas in New Zealand it is 0.9, which means that almost every question set contains a point of order. This happens because an unlimited number of supplementary questions in the New Zealand Parliament leads to disorder and, consequently, to more points of order. In the Australian House of Representatives one question set contained 4 points of order (Question 6, 19.09.2007). It also contained 7 interjections that led to such a big for the Australian Parliament number of points of order.

A mention should be made of a question set containing 18 points of order. Basically this is not a question but a dissent from ruling motion – a set of formal procedures which took place on the last sitting day of the Parliament before the general elections in 2007 (19.09.2007). Formal procedures can only be

introduced by means of motions in the Parliament, which happen relatively rarely and thus are all treated as points of order in this research.

Now I will look at the types of points of order raised to compare those with the New Zealand ones.

1. When an MP believes, that the question has not been answered or the question or answer was not relevant (Standing Order 104[2]). This type of points of order is frequently raised in both Parliaments and is quite popular among the Opposition Members because Ministers often try to avoid giving direct answers for various reasons:

ANTHONY ALBANESE: *Mr. Speaker, on relevance: the Prime Minister, at the beginning of the answer, redefined the question* (Australian Hansard, Question 3, 14.02.2007).

The following format is more desirable:

TONY BURKE: *Mr. Speaker, I raise a point of order under standing order 104. The Prime Minister missed the word 'exit'* (Australian Hansard, Question 3, 14.02.2007).

[2] **104 Answers**
(a) An answer must be directly relevant to the question (*Standing and Sessional Orders*, 2010).

2. To point out to the Speaker that the breach of rules has taken place or the utterance was not consistent with the Standing Orders. This type of points of order can also be found in both Parliaments, and it represents another technique that MPs employ to find fault with the coalition in order to interrupt the Question Time flow. It was equally used by the Government and the Opposition MPs in 2007. This type has the following subtypes in accordance with Standing Orders cited in the points of order:

a) A Member was referred to by their name (Standing Order 64[3]):

Hon. ROGER PRICE: *Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I ask that you enforce standing order 64* (Australian Hansard, Question 6, 14.02.2007).

Hon. ARCH BEVIS: *Mr. Speaker, I raise a point of order. While we are implementing the standing orders so rigidly, can I suggest that you invite the Leader of the House to refer to members by their title rather than the House having to witness the repeated abuse of that standing order?* (Australian Hansard, Question 12, 14.02.2007).

b) The question had already been answered (Standing Order 100(b)[4]):

[3] **64 No Member to be referred to by name**
In the House and the Main Committee, a Member shall not be referred to by name, but by one of the following forms, as appropriate:
(a) the Member's ministerial office (e.g. Prime Minister, Minister for Defence, Attorney-General);
(b) the Member's parliamentary office (e.g. Leader of the House, Leader of the Opposition, Chief Government Whip);
(c) the Member's electoral division (e.g. Member for Adelaide) (*Standing and Sessional Orders*, 2010).

ANTHONY ALBANESE: *Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I refer you to standing order 100(b)* (Australian Hansard, Question 12, 14.02.2007).

Hon. BRONWYN BISHOP: *Mr. Speaker, I raise a point of order. That question was asked yesterday and fully answered by the minister concerned so it is out of order* (Australian Hansard, Question 9, 07.02.2007).

c) Using offensive words (Standing Order 89[5]), e.g.:

ANTHONY ALBANESE: *Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Standing order 64 refers to no member being referred to by name. Standing order 89 refers to offensive words not being used against members of the parliament. Standing order 90—* (Australian Hansard, Question 12, 28.02.2007).

d) An inappropriate question was asked of a Minister, or the question is outside of the Minister's responsibility (Standing Order 98[6]), e.g.:

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[4] **100 Rules for questions**
(b) A question fully answered must not be asked again (*Standing and Sessional Orders*, 2010).

[5] **89 Offensive words**
A Member must not use offensive words against:
(a) either House of the Parliament or a Member of the Parliament; or
(b) a member of the Judiciary (*Standing and Sessional Orders*, 2010).

[6] **98 Questions to Ministers**
(c) A Minister can only be questioned on the following matters, for which he or she is responsible or officially connected:
(i) public affairs;
(ii) administration; or
(iii) proceedings pending in the House.
(d) Questioners must not ask Ministers:
(i) for an expression of opinion, including a legal opinion; or

Hon. BRONWYN BISHOP: *Mr. Speaker, I raise a point of order. I draw your attention to standing order 98, which lays out the types of issues that may be addressed in questions. This is not one of them, and I would ask you to direct the member that way* (Australian Hansard, Question 3, 15.08.2007).

e) Members behave in a disruptive manner (Standing Order 91[7]), e.g.:

Hon. DUNCAN KERR: *Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Mr. Speaker, during what was by any measure an exceptionally serious question being asked by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, there were a series of interjections of a crude and quite unnecessary nature against which you took no action. Frankly, on an issue of this importance we are entitled to have those questions heard and determined by the House without that kind of behaviour on the government's side* (Australian Hansard, Question 3, 19.09.2007).

f) A Member or a party was misrepresented, e.g.:

(ii) to announce government policy, but may seek an explanation about the policy and its application, and may ask the Prime Minister whether a Minister's statement in the House represents government policy (*Standing and Sessional Orders*, 2010).

[7] **91 Disorderly conduct**
A Member's conduct shall be considered disorderly if the Member has:
(a) persistently and wilfully obstructed the House;
(b) used objectionable words, which he or she has refused to withdraw;
(c) persistently and wilfully refused to conform to a standing order;
(d) wilfully disobeyed an order of the House;
(e) persistently and wilfully disregarded the authority of the Speaker; or
(f) been considered by the Speaker to have behaved in a disorderly manner (*Standing and Sessional Orders*, 2010).

Hon. WILSON TUCKEY: *Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. In his opening remarks to a personal explanation, the member said something that was misrepresenting the Labor Party* (Australian Hansard, Personal explanation 1, 15.08.2007).

3. To move a motion, i.e. to put forward a proposal for action in the Parliament, for consideration, debate and decision. It is important to notice that no motions were moved in the New Zealand Parliament in 2008, whereas in the Australian House of Representatives three types of motions were put forward in 2007:

a) That a Member be suspended from the service of the House. This motion is put forward by a Member who considers another Member's behaviour disorderly and believes that it cannot be tolerated any longer in the Chamber. As a response to this motion the Speaker orders the Member's suspension from the House for a certain period of time, e.g.:

Hon. TONY ABBOTT: *I move: That the member for Brisbane be suspended from the service of the House.*

Mr. SPEAKER: *Order! The honourable member for Brisbane is suspended from the service of the House for 24 hours under standing order 94(b)* (Australian Hansard, Question 14, 14.02.2007).

b) That the Speaker's ruling be dissented from. This motion is put forward when a Member considers the Speaker's ruling to be unfair. It must be declared at once and submitted in writing (Standing Order 87, Standing and Sessional Orders, 2003), e.g.:

ANTHONY ALBANESE*: I move: That the Speaker's ruling be dissented from*

(Australian Hansard, Dissent from ruling, 19.09.2007).

It is interesting to notice that although a dissent from ruling is a tactical weapon used by the Opposition against the Speaker of the House before the general election, the Speaker has to preside while the motion is being put forward. Anthony Albanese tends to address Mr. Speaker using the pronoun 'you', thus aiming his accusations at him both as the Speaker (public positive face (Gruber, 1993)) and a person (speaker's positive face (Brown & Levinson, 1987)). However, in her study of parliamentary impoliteness Harris (2001: 466) noticed that "even the most serious face-threatening acts rarely, if ever, occasion a breakdown in interpersonal relationships nor are they intended to".

The position of the Chair of the House, as Culpeper (1996: 354) rightly notices, makes it easier for the Speaker to maintain his positive face by being even more impolite: "a powerful participant has more freedom to be impolite, because he or she can (a) reduce the ability of less powerful participant to retaliate with

impoliteness (e.g. through the denial of speaking rights), and (b) threaten more severe retaliation should the less powerful participant be impolite.

Another interesting phenomenon is the nature of the dissent. Standing Orders suggest that a Member may only put forward the dissent if they object to the Speaker's ruling[8]. However, when the motion was put forward by Anthony Albanese, the Speaker made several attempts to point out to Mr. Albanese that exclusion of a Member from the Chamber is a direction and not a ruling, and the dissent from ruling, as the name of the procedure suggests, can only be moved if there is an objection to a ruling. Nevertheless, Anthony Albanese continues in persistently putting forward the motion:

> **Mr. SPEAKER:** *The member for Gorton will remove himself under standing order 94(a).*
>
> The member for Gorton then left the chamber.
>
> **ANTHONY ALBANESE:** *Mr. Speaker, on a point of order: on what basis did you just exclude the member for Gorton?*
>
> **Mr. SPEAKER:** *The Manager of Opposition Business would be well aware that, if he has questions to ask of the Speaker, he will ask them at the appropriate time.*

[8] **87 Dissent from ruling of Speaker**
If a Member dissents from a ruling of the Speaker, the objection or dissent must be declared at once. A Member moving a motion of dissent must submit the motion in writing. If the motion is seconded, the Speaker shall then propose the question to the House, and debate may proceed immediately (*Standing and Sessional Orders*, 2010).

ANTHONY ALBANESE: *Mr. Speaker, it is a point of order. On what basis did you exclude the member for Gorton from this parliament?*

Mr. SPEAKER: *The Manager of Opposition Business would be well aware that, if he wishes to challenge the exercising of 94(a), he should do so under other things; otherwise, I will insist he resume his seat.*

ANTHONY ALBANESE: *Mr. Speaker, on a point of order: under what standing order have you excluded the member for Gorton?*

Mr. SPEAKER: *The answer is, very simply, 94(a).*

ANTHONY ALBANESE: *I move that the Speaker's ruling be dissented from.*

Government members interjecting.

Mr. SPEAKER: *Order! The members on my right are not assisting. I say to the Manager of Opposition Business that exercising standing order 94(a) is not a ruling; it is a direction. Therefore, the member cannot dissent from the use of 94(a).*

ANTHONY ALBANESE: *I move that that ruling be dissented from.*

Mr. SPEAKER: *I say to the Manager of Opposition Business that that is not a ruling; it is a direction* (Australian Hansard, Question 9, 19.09.2007).

c) To second the motion. In this case the dissent from ruling motion was seconded which is a formal requirement followed by the proposition of the question to the Parliament (Standing Order 87, Standing and Sessional Orders, 2003), e.g.:

Hon. BOB McMULLAN: *I second the motion and reserve my right to speak* (Australian Hansard, Dissent from ruling, 19.09.2007).

4. To point out to the Speaker that the utterance was too long. Although this issue is seldom raised in the Australian House of Representatives, and in practice there is no time limit on questions and answers, Standing Orders 100(f)[9] and 104(c)[10] cite limitations on these types of utterances. Hence, this point of order is used strategically by different party members to interrupt the speech of a coalition member, e.g.:

Hon. TONY ABBOTT: *Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Questions to you, as to other people in this House, should be succinct. This member is abusing the forms of the House. It is a debating point in the form of a question and he should be sat down* (Australian Hansard, Question to the Speaker 1, 07.02.2007).

5. When unparliamentary language was used and the remark withdrawal was required. It is interesting that no apology is required in the Australian Parliament as compared to the New Zealand rules where an offender has to withdraw the offensive remark and apologise:

ANTHONY ALBANESE: *Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Perhaps the lying rodent should call him into line.*

[9] **100 Rules for questions**
(f) The duration of each question is limited to 45 seconds (*Standing and Sessional Orders*, 2010).
[10] **104 Answers**
(c) The duration of each answer is limited to 4 minutes (*Standing and Sessional Orders*, 2010).

Mr. SPEAKER: *The Manager of Opposition Business will withdraw that offensive remark.*

ANTHONY ALBANESE: *No, I will not.*

Mr. SPEAKER: *The Manager of Opposition Business is well aware that that expression is unparliamentary and he will withdraw it.*

ANTHONY ALBANESE: *I will behave consistently, Mr. Speaker.*

Mr. SPEAKER: *The Manager of Opposition Business will withdraw that statement.*

ANTHONY ALBANESE: *I withdraw, in accordance with your request. I would ask you to apply the same rules to the member opposite, the Minister for Health and Ageing.*

Mr. SPEAKER: *The Manager of Opposition Business will withdraw without reservation.*

ANTHONY ALBANESE: *I withdraw.*

Mr. SPEAKER: *I thank the Manager of Opposition Business* (Australian Hansard, Question 12, 28.02.2007).

6. To question the Speaker's ruling. This is a very popular point of order in New Zealand, first due to the personality of Madam Speaker, who is much milder and tolerant that the Australian Speaker, and secondly, because no questions to the Speaker are allowed in New Zealand, whereas in the Australian Parliament MPs have an opportunity to ask questions of the Speaker in the end of each Question Time session. Thus, in the New Zealand Parliament 16 points of order were raised on the issue of the Speaker's ruling while in the Australian House there were only 5.

All of them were raised by Anthony Albanese – one of the most active Opposition MPs, who was also the initiator of the Speaker's dissent from ruling, e.g.:

ANTHONY ALBANESE: *I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The member for Perth asked that an offensive remark be withdrawn. <u>You have not ruled on that</u>* (Australian Hansard, Question 6, 19.09.2007).

ANTHONY ALBANESE: *Mr. Speaker, on a point of order: <u>on what basis did you just exclude the member for Gorton</u>?* (Australian Hansard, Question 9, 19.09.2007).

7. To seek leave to make a personal explanation. This is another category of points of order which is not presented in the New Zealand House, whereas in Australia it is quite popular (3 personal explanations from the Opposition MPs and the same number from the Government MPs). Members use this opportunity when they believe, that they were misrepresented or felt that an explanation might shed some light on the issue, e.g.:

KELVIN THOMPSON: *Mr. Speaker, I seek leave to make a personal explanation* (Australian Hansard, Personal Explanation 1, 07.02.2007).

8. Points of order ruled out by the Speaker as being not points of order. As has been mentioned before, the Speaker of the Australian House of Representatives wants the MPs to be very specific when raising their points of order. They should clearly indicate the point of order type and / or refer to a particular Standing Order, otherwise it may be ruled out as being not a point of order, especially if raised by the Opposition, e.g.:

> **ANTHONY ALBANESE:** *Mr. Speaker, on a point of order: this question is less than 19 words.*
>
> **Mr. SPEAKER:** *The member for Grayndler will come straight to his point of order.*
>
> **ANTHONY ALBANESE:** *It asks: what is the Prime Minister's exit strategy for Iraq?*
>
> **Mr. SPEAKER:** *The member for Grayndler will resume his seat. <u>That is not a point of order.</u>*
>
> **ANTHONY ALBANESE:** *<u>On relevance.</u>*
>
> **Mr. SPEAKER:** *<u>You did not raise the point of relevance when you were on your feet</u>* (Australian Hansard, Question 3, 14.02.2007).

Many of these points of order are treated as points of debate, and the latter are not allowed during Question Time:

> **KELVIN THOMPSON:** *Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Labor opposed the war. I ask you to draw him back to the question.*
>
> **Mr. SPEAKER:** *The member for Wills will resume his seat. <u>If the member wishes to take a point of order, he will come straight to it; he will not debate it</u>* (Australian Hansard, Question 9, 14.02.2007).

The Speaker of the Australian House of Representatives is very strict and insists that everything should be in order in the Chamber. If a Member persistently breaks the rules, they get a warning that they will be *'dealt with'*:

> **Hon. TONY ABBOTT:** *Mr. Speaker, on a point of order: under the procedures of the House, points of order must be genuine, not rhetorical tricks. This is a consistent abuse of the procedures of the House by members opposite and should be dealt with.*
> **Mr. SPEAKER:** *The Leader of the House raises a valid point of order. The member for Lilley should be well aware that if he wants to raise a point of order he will raise a point of order; otherwise, I will deal with him* (Australian Hansard, Question 17, 15.08.2007).

9. Other:

a) When the Speaker interrupts the Member raising a point of order.

This did not happen in the New Zealand Parliament, e.g.:

> **ANTHONY ALBANESE:** *Mr. Speaker, on a point of order—*
> **Mr. SPEAKER:** *The minister is in order* (Australian Hansard, Question 12, 28.02.2007).

In the following example the Speaker completely neglects the intention of the Government party member to make a point of order twice. Thus, Hon. Bronwyn

Bishop only managed to make her point of order clear to the House when the Minister finished answering the question and the point of order became irrelevant:

> **Hon. BRONWYN BISHOP:** *Mr. Speaker, I rose to make this point of order—*
>
> **Mr. SPEAKER:** *Order! The member for Mackellar will resume her seat. When a member has the call, the member will be heard. I will take action.*
>
> **Hon. BRONWYN BISHOP:** *I rose to raise my point of order, whilst the question was halfway through, to point out that a question—*
>
> **Mr. SPEAKER:** *The member for Melbourne Ports is warned!*
>
> [...]
>
> **Hon. BRONWYN BISHOP:** *I rose to make the point of order that the question being asked by the member opposite had a long preface, which is against the standing orders. I rose part way through the question, which I note he has now completed, to make that point of order. For the future, it has become the practice of the opposition to use long prefaces to questions, which are quite out of order.*
>
> **Mr. SPEAKER:** *I listened carefully to the question. The question was in order. I call the Prime Minister* (Australian Hansard, Question 5, 13.06.2007).

b) To request a Member to table the document, e.g.:

> **STEVEN CIOBO:** *Mr. Speaker, I would appreciate it if the minister would table the front page of the document he referred to* (Australian Hansard, Question 18, 20.06.2007).

The following table shows the activity of different political parties' representatives when raising points of order. It is evident that this is the game of two players: the Liberal Party and the Labor Party. However, the Labor Party's activity (the Opposition) is 2.7 times higher.

	No. of points of order raised	**On relevance**	**Breach of rules**	**To make a motion**	**Remark withdrawal is required**	**The utterance is too long**	**To question the Speaker's ruling**	**To make a personal explanation**	**Ruled out as being not a PoO**	**Other**
Liberal	**30**	2	14	2		2		3	2	5
Labor	**81**	28	14	10	3	1	5	3	13	4
National										
Country Liberal										
Independent										
Total:	**111**	**30**	**28**	**12**	**3**	**3**	**5**	**6**	**15**	**9**

Table 9: Number and types of points of order raised by different parties in the Australian Federal Parliament in 2007.

As has been stated above, the most active Member in raising points of order was the Manager of Opposition Business, Anthony Albanese, who made 26 points of order, which makes up 24% of the total number of points of order raised on Wednesdays in 2007. Another interesting observation shows that only 16.6% of MPs raised one or more points of order, i.e. 25 Members out of 150. Out of the 25 MPs 16 were Labor Party Members. This takes us back to the strategy of the Opposition to put forward their more experienced speakers. Indeed, for 14 out of the 16 named above Opposition MPs this was not a first term in the Parliament. Salmond (Personal Communication, 2011) believes, that "In these

circumstances, senior Opposition politicians will want to showcase their Ministers-in-waiting in these scarce high-profile speaking slots for themselves rather than share them with junior colleagues. It is just another way of putting your best foot forward".

5.6. Interruptions and comments

Interruptions are comments by nature. They are treated as a separate category in this research partially because they actually interrupt someone's speech, whereas comments are made during the pauses between the utterances. The other reason is, in public events "interruptions can display dominance or power" because "by interrupting, one not only stops the speaker from continuing, but also shows one's power to take the floor and influence other people" (Ekström, 2009: 390). Thus, interruptions are a tactical tool of one of the sides used against the other side. In addition, interruptions "provide a good occasion to observe the relationship that exists between norms and actions in […] parliamentary discourse". They are "forbidden by the rules of procedure, yet they are a regular occurrence, a systematic and a rule-governed practice accepted by all the participants" (Carbó, 1992: 25, 30).

A special category was introduced in the database for individual and group MPs making comments or interruptions when it was impossible for the Clerk

transcribing parliamentary proceedings to identify who the speaker was because of the noise in the Chamber or due to some other factors. This category was termed Anonymous.

5.6.1. New Zealand

286 records that fall under the category of interruptions and comments were identified. Among those there are 43 interruptions and 243 comments uttered in the New Zealand Parliament on Wednesdays in 2006.

Both comments and interruptions tend to be relatively short as they are not authorised by the Speaker and thus are out of order. The average number of words is only 16.4, with the shortest comment being just 1 word long. As for the longest comment, it is worthwhile mentioning again that at times Hon. Margaret Wilson used to allow the Parliament a great deal of freedom, especially when Members had arguments, and the Question Time sessions turned into a battle field, so some MPs took that opportunity to speak out.

Harris (1989: 147) believes, that "the occurrence of simultaneous speech, whether an interruption or not, seems clearly related to aspects of control". Holmes (1995: 31) expresses a similar idea by saying, that "[i]f you want to gain the floor, interrupting is generally considered an effective – though

impolite – strategy". The longest comment of 128 words was made by the Government MP Hon. Trevor Mallard. Other longer comments with the length ranging from 85 to 125 words were also made by long serving MPs, who are more confident in the House when making their views public and breaking rules.

What aim do MPs pursue when making comments? Goffman (1980: 187) believes, that "when two teams establish an official working consensus as a guarantee for safe social interaction, we may usually detect an unofficial line of communication which each team directs at the other. This unofficial communication may be carried on by innuendo, mimicked accents, well-placed jokes, significant pauses, veiled hints, purposeful kidding, expressive overtones, and other sign practices". Thus, interruptions and comments serve as a device of unofficial communication between the MPs and as a means for achieving their political goals.

Carbó (1992: 30) believes, that "interruptions tend to appear predominantly and almost exclusively in long and rather 'heated' debate sessions, where numerous speakers would like to obtain speech turn". In a way, confrontations are important for the successful work of the Parliament because "in these formal interactions if you stay within the code you can only listen in silence and allow a pause to elapse afterwards which in fact means yes" (Bloch, 1975: 9). Many

comments are short and ironical or even offensive by nature. They show MPs' attitudes towards what is being said in the Chamber.

The following categories of comments and interruptions were identified in the New Zealand House:

1. Those requesting or providing more information:

   a) Requesting more information, e.g.:

RODNEY HIDE: *Of course, we still have the problem of New Zealand First not explaining where all its money has come from* (NZ Hansard, Question 02, 02.07.2008).

   b) Providing more information, e.g.:

Hon. Dr. MICHAEL CULLEN: *The Minister left because she is due to catch a flight; she had to leave the Chamber* (NZ Hansard, Question 11, 23.07.2008).

2. Those criticising an MP / a Party or their attitude towards something. When this happens many MPs "forget" the rules and switch to informal language, e.g.:

Hon. HARRY DUYNHOVEN: ***You*** *complain readily enough when flippant questions are asked, so why do* ***you*** *go and ask stupid ones yourself?* (NZ Hansard, Question 10, 27.08.2008).

The Prime Minister Helen Clark would occasionally respond to other Members' comments because "when Members' public face [...] is threatened, they will defend themselves or counter-attack in some way" (De Ayala, 2001: 148):

RODNEY HIDE: *Are New Zealanders to take it from the Prime Minister's performance in the House today that although she has come here to answer questions about rail, she does not know what it will cost taxpayers, she does not know what the premium was that was paid by the Government, and she does not know what the ongoing fiscal cost of rail is, but that she has actually taken the trouble to research the various shareholdings of Mr. John Key, his directorships, and pretends to know all about that when she does not know about the rail policy and the cost of it to New Zealanders; does that not prove that this purchase is all about politics and not the good of the country?*

Rt. Hon. HELEN CLARK: *I know that the ACT party does not give a damn about sustainability or about having a sustainable transport system. I know that the ACT party is ideologically opposed to public ownership. That and nothing else explains Mr. Hide's hysteria* (NZ Hansard, Question 01, 02.07.2008).

3. Those showing disbelief, e.g.:

Hon. BILL ENGLISH: *That's not true* (NZ Hansard, Question 02, 06.08.2008).

Dr. the Hon. LOCKWOOD SMITH: *You just made that up then, Jim, didn't you?* (NZ Hansard, Question 12, 25.06.2008).

4. Those showing disapproval of a policy, a Member's words or behaviour, e.g.:

Hon. Dr. NICK SMITH: *It's a stupid policy!* (NZ Hansard, Question 08, 19.03.2008).

MAURICE WILLIAMSON: *You've put a tax on it* (NZ Hansard, Question 08, 19.03.2008).

5. Those used to embarrass, humiliate or mock a Member. New Zealand MPs favour this category of comments as it is a powerful tool for undermining a Member's positive face (Brown & Levinson, 1987). The recipient would normally provide a witty reply whereas the Speaker tends to ignore such exchanges unless they are utterly outrageous, e.g.:

Hon. TREVOR MALLARD: *This member is so last week!*

GERRY BROWNLEE: *I will start again. Can the Minister confirm—*

Hon. TREVOR MALLARD: *He's so last century.*

GERRY BROWNLEE: *I can tell members that this guy is obviously late for the anger management class. There he is, just swaying on the ropes—"Rope-a-dope" Trevor!* (NZ Hansard, Question 11, 19.03.2008).

Hon. CHRIS CARTER: *If Mr. English's understanding of the English language is different from mine—and I guess he does come from Southland—I will repeat my answer* (NZ Hansard, Question 08, 27.08.2008).

6. Those aiming to insult an MP. Ilie (2004: 52) believes, that "parliamentary insults fulfil different roles with regard to reinforcing certain beliefs and values, challenging others, as well as to imposing or rejecting certain norms and principles that regulate the practices for negotiating short-term and long-term political goals". She goes on by saying, that "parliamentary insulting behaviour represents a conventionalised and not unexpected response-triggering act because it is powerful enough to make the addressee prone to react".

Parliamentary insults include name calling and describing a Member's unfavourable qualities, e.g.:

BOB CLARKSON: *Dickhead!* (NZ Hansard, Question 05, 02.04.2008).

Rt. Hon. WINSTON PETERS: *What, a doozy like Tau?* (NZ Hansard, Question 10, 16.04.2008).

Hon. CLAYTON COSGROVE: *Because you're hopeless* (NZ Hansard, Question 10, 30.07.2008).

Rt. Hon. WINSTON PETERS: *It is not often that a member of Parliament gets up and displays his or her ignorance, but the member just said that she had no idea what the party she joined, the National Party, was doing on immigration when it had its million-dollar investor categories. If National members can share that, then it just shows how perversely stupid they have become* (NZ Hansard, Question 10, 16.04.2008).

RODNEY HIDE: *That is not correct. The Minister has no responsibility for what Mr. Peters raised. And Mr. Mallard is wrong, because if he were right, we would be able to raise as a possibility that Mr. Peters is a tired old drunk, and we are not allowed to say that* (NZ Hansard, Question 02, 02.07.2008).

Surprisingly enough, no ruling followed from the Speaker regarding the verbal abuse in Mr. Hide's comment cited above. Instead, Hon. Margaret Wilson's ruling referred to the previous utterances and she reminded the Members that "*The Standing Orders make it clear that members cannot state that someone is under the influence of someone else for profit*" (NZ Hansard, Question 02, 02.07.2008).

In the majority of cases it is the men who use this device to hit political targets. Holmes (1995: 2) believes, that "[m]en's reasons for talking often focus on the content of the talk or its outcome, rather than on how it affects the feelings of others".

7. Other – the largest category of comments and interruptions. The table below shows that the Labour Party Members (Government) favour this category more than others. There were 70 comments made by the Labour Party MPs. This is twice as many as the National MPs (35) and over 4 times more than NZ First Members (16). This can easily be explained if one looks at such parameters as who made those comments, who they were addressed to and their nature. Thus, out of 70 comments from the Labour MPs 43 were made by Hon. Margaret Wilson, the Speaker of the House. Although no debates are allowed at Question Time, MPs did this quite often in the New Zealand Parliament of 2008 discussing each others' comments, making their points of view clear, providing different explanations, etc. The Speaker would occasionally make comments and statements too, which could not be treated as 'Speaker's Ruling' due to their nature. So, they were all regarded as comments in this research:

a) Comments addressed to the Speaker (when talking to the Speaker MPs use the pronoun '*you*').

- Comments indicating to the Speaker in an unofficial way that a ruling is required, e.g.:

Hon. Dr. NICK SMITH: *I am just asking you to enforce the Standing Orders* (NZ Hansard, Question 11, 12.03.2008).

Rt. Hon. WINSTON PETERS: *Tell the buffoon to sit down and keep quiet* (NZ Hansard, Question 02, 27.08.2008).

Hon. BILL ENGLISH: *Madam Speaker, in the case of Rodney Hide and Winston Peters you took the action of getting the member to withdraw that term because it is unparliamentary. I suggest that these are similar circumstances and that the same action would be required of the Chair* (NZ Hansard, Question 04, 27.08.2008).

- To raise a point of order. These utterances are treated as comments rather than points of order because Members raising those were either interrupted or for some other reasons never got to the point, e.g.:

Hon. DARREN HUGHES: *Speaking to the point of order—* (NZ Hansard, Question 10, 16.04.2008).

- Comments providing explanations or MPs' point of view to the Speaker and the House, e.g.:

Hon. PAUL SWAIN: *On the basis of that, Madam Speaker, I think the Minister should withdraw his withdrawal and apology* (NZ Hansard, Question 10, 16.04.2008).

Rt. Hon. WINSTON PETERS: *That is a fair question, and the Minister should be allowed to answer it* (NZ Hansard, Question 08, 21.05.2008).

b) Comments from the Speaker.

- Comments that should have been rulings but the choice of words and suggestive, rather than imperative, style of the Speaker's utterances did not allow to treat them as rulings, e.g.:

Madam SPEAKER: *The member has asked three supplementary questions in one* (NZ Hansard, Question 10, 02.04.2008).

Madam SPEAKER: *That is straying a little from the initial question* (NZ Hansard, Question 11, 02.04.2008).

Madam SPEAKER: *That was an unhelpful comment. It is impossible to hear, and just because some members may not wish to listen to the question or the answer, that does not mean other members in the House do not have a right to do so. However, I hope the Minister has concluded—* (NZ Hansard, Question 08, 28.05.2008).

Madam SPEAKER: *That last comment was uncalled for* (NZ Hansard, Question 05, 06.08.2008).

- Short comments, e.g.:

Madam SPEAKER: *Precisely!* (NZ Hansard, Question 01, 05.03.2008).

Madam SPEAKER: *OK* (NZ Hansard, Question 06, 09.04.2008).

Madam SPEAKER: *Yes, I quite agree* (NZ Hansard, Question 06, 09.04.2008).

Madam SPEAKER: *The member did. I appreciate that he did that and that he has now raised that larger issue. Thank you* (NZ Hansard, Question 06, 09.04.2008).

Madam SPEAKER: *I did not say that, Mr. Peters* (NZ Hansard, Question 10, 16.04.2008).

c) Unfinished comments. They might have been other types of utterances but because of their unfinished nature it was impossible to determine their type, e.g.:

PANSY WONG: *It's going to take a long time—* (NZ Hansard, Question 10, 16.04.2008).

Hon. CHRIS CARTER: *What I am trying to tell this House, and am successfully doing with most members, but not, of course, with the Opposition—* (NZ Hansard, Question 12, 10.09.2008).

d) Miscellaneous. Speculations of MPs on different topics, e.g.:

Hon. Dr. MICHAEL CULLEN: *If the word "slippery" is now to be unparliamentary, I think we should publish a very short dictionary of about five pages long, for use by members of Parliament* (NZ Hansard, Question 02, 05.03.2008).

RODNEY HIDE: *I am now unable to apologise, because if I did it would look like I was being blackmailed and Mr. Peters had something on me that was true* (NZ Hansard, Question 02, 07.02.2008).

	No. of comments and interruptions	**To request or provide more information**	**To criticize an MP / Party or their attitude**	**To show disbelief**	**To show disapproval**	**To embarrass, humiliate or mock at an MP**	**To insult an MP**	**Other**

Labour	**121**	18	15	1		17	1	70
National	**92**	19	12	9	3	13	1	35
NZ First	**28**	2	3		1	3	2	17
United Future								
Green	**1**	1						
Maori	**1**							1
NZ Progressive	**2**		1					1
ACT NZ	**14**	1	3			1	1	8
Independent								
Anonymous	**27**	8	3	4	2	3		7
Total:	**286**	**49**	**37**	**14**	**5**	**37**	**5**	**139**

Table 10: Number and types of comments and interruptions uttered by different parties MPs in the New Zealand Parliament in 2008.

The large number of comments made in the New Zealand House of Representatives suggests, that MPs get a great deal of freedom and the Speaker tends to ignore many of the comments unless they are utterly unparliamentary, or if other MPs request rulings on the matter. Also, all the Members who made a lot of comments were long-term MPs who felt very confident when breaking rules. The biggest number of comments (36) were made by Gerry Brownlee (National, 12 years in the Parliament), then 20 from Hon. Trevor Mallard (Labour, 21 years), followed by 19 comments from Rt. Hon. Winston Peters (NZ First, 30 years) who was the longest serving MP at the time. A fair number of comments came from the ACT New Zealand Party which was represented by only two MPs in the House in 2008. All the 14 comments were made by Rodney Hide.

5.6.2. Australia

This section will look at both comments and interruptions in the Australian Parliament.

Interruptions here are called interjections. Supplementary questions asked in the Australian House of Representatives are basically comments, but they receive meaningful replies from Ministers. If no reply is given, they are treated here as comments.

The following categories of comments and interjections uttered in the Australian Federal Chamber of Representatives were identified:

1. Those requesting or providing more information:

   a) Requesting more information. This category is also presented in the classification of New Zealand comments and interruptions. It contains quite a lot of utterances as many Australian MPs, being unable to ask supplementary questions, seek clarification of facts or more details this way, e.g.:

Hon. JOE HOCKEY: *Were you involved? He was!* (Australian Hansard, Question 16, 07.02.2007).

Hon. MALCOLM TURNBULL: *Is the maximum $4,000 or not?* (Australian Hansard, Question 11, 28.03.2007).

b) Providing more information. This category is also quite frequent because it is a rare occasion in the Parliament when all MPs have similar opinions on different questions. Thus, they present their points of view by offering an alternative opinion or more details, e.g.:

LINDSAY TANNER: *Otherwise known as Work Choices* (Australian Hansard, Question 08, 07.02.2007).

ANTHONY ALBANESE: *I notified your office earlier today* (Australian Hansard, Question to the Speaker 01, 12.09.2007).

2. Those criticising an MP / a Party or their attitude towards something. Formal rules of behaviour are usually ignored because of lack of time (the Speaker is supposed to interrupt such utterances as soon as possible), and because criticism is seldom polite, e.g.:

WAYNE SWAN: *We put the policy in place and you opposed it* (Australian Hansard, Question 03, 20.06.2007).

ANTHONY ALBANESE: *Well, can I refer to standing orders in doing so? That is something the Leader of the House has never done, ever—not once* (Australian Hansard, Question 09, 07.02.2007).

Hon. JOHN HOWARD: *Mr. Speaker, I am describing your behaviour. If you think it is a reflection, it is your interpretation, not mine. I am simply describing it accurately, because it has been inconsistent and unreasonable. We find it entirely unacceptable, and that is what has provoked this point of order.* (Australian Hansard, Question 01, 21.03.2007).

3. Those showing disbelief are a milder version of those that accuse Members of telling lies. Accusations of telling lies are strictly out of order. If this happens in the House, the Member is supposed to withdraw their comment. Because the Speaker of the Australian Parliament was much stricter than the NZ Speaker, he insisted on order in the Chamber. Thus, there were no direct accusations of telling lies in 2007 in the Australian Parliament from the Opposition Members. However, the Australian Speaker used to show a great deal of support of the Government Party and tended to openly ignore any breach of rules by the Liberal Party MPs. Hence, the Government MPs were given more freedom in the House, and this research has identified two cases of lie accusations by the Government MP:

JOHN HOWARD: [...] *What the Leader of the Opposition has deliberately done is to take what is by definition a measurement of productivity that would yield a low result and compare it with measurements of productivity which by definition would yield higher results. In the process, he has deliberately set out to mislead the Australian public in relation to this issue. He did not disclose this in the interview that he gave this morning. He must have known—or after the interview he would have been told by his advisers—that he had misled the Australian public. Once again we have the Leader of the Opposition faced with the dilemma of confessing to one of two sins: is he ignorant of what productivity represents in this country or, if not ignorant, has he deliberately misled the Australian public by falsely comparing a set of figures with another set of figures, knowing full well that the measurements and the definitions of those two figures are quite different?...What the Leader of the Opposition did was to conflate the two in the interview this morning to give a completely false impression and to continue the process of deceiving and misleading the Australian people on what he says is the centrepiece of his economic attack on the government. The Leader of the Opposition ought to lift his head from his papers and face the reality that, again, he has deliberately deceived the Australian people* (Australian Hansard, Question 02, 20.06.2007).

ANDREW ROBB: *I thank the member for Macquarie for his question. Over recent months, in the absence of any worthwhile policy ideas on the other side of the House, they have resorted to asserting that the government has done nothing on skills—and the Leader of the Opposition was at it again this morning. This is just not true; it is a political lie, and the Leader of the Opposition knows it [...]*(Australian Hansard, Question 18, 08.08.2007).

In both examples it is the Leader of the Opposition who is attacked. To make their point more plausible the Ministers repeatedly uttered the idea to the House. No ruling returning the Ministers to order was made in both cases. Moreover, this was happening even when the motion of dissent from Speaker's ruling was put forward when Hon. Tony Abbott, the Leader of the House, accused Anthony Albanese of '*telling untruth*' 8 times. When a point of order was raised, the Speaker still considered it to be in order:

> **Hon. TONY ABBOTT:** *If the Manager of Opposition Business is going to be taken seriously, he should tell the truth. In the course of his contribution he made two statements that he knows to be untrue. First of all, he claimed that if this motion of dissent is carried you are out of a job. He knows that that is not true. There have been many motions of dissent. Some have been passed in this House and the speakers against whom they have been passed have not lost their jobs. It is only a motion of want of confidence in the Speaker that has the effect that the Manager of Opposition Business claimed. But a more important untruth is that he claimed in his contribution that more people had been suspended from the House under your speakership than ever before. That is absolutely untrue. It is completely untrue. He knows it is untrue and he should not make that kind of misleading statement before this House. This Manager of Opposition Business has no regard for the truth. He has no regard for parliamentary standards. The motion that he has moved cannot be taken seriously by this House.*
>
> **WAYNE SWAN:** *I rise on a point of order. Could you bring him back to order?*

Mr. SPEAKER: *The Leader of the House is responding to the motion moved by the Manager of Opposition Business.* ***He is entirely in order*** (Australian Hansard, Dissent from Ruling, 19.09.2007).

Therefore, in return the inventive Opposition MPs had to find some ways of attacking the Ministers. Bloch (1975) claims, that it is much more important how things are said than what is said in the Parliament: "the reason why there is such stress on the manner in which things are said rather than on what is said, seems to be that by defining and regulating the manner the content is also, albeit indirectly, restricted" (Bloch, 1975: 5). Thus, the following indirect accusations of telling lies were used by the Opposition Members during Question Time, e.g.:

JULIA GILLARD: *Not true!* (Australian Hansard, Question 11, 09.05.2007).

Hon. ARCH BEVIS: *In answer to what proposition? Try telling the truth for once* (Australian Hansard, Question 18, 15.08.2007).

PATRICK SECKER: *I wouldn't believe that one!* (Australian Hansard, Question 17, 28.02.2007).

4. Those showing disapproval of a policy, a Member's words or behaviour. These types of comments can mostly be heard from the Opposition MPs as it is their goal to criticize the actions of the Government. However,

criticizing comments from the Government MPs are quite often uttered as well, e.g.:

Hon. JOE HOCKEY (Government): *That is why I wonder why the Labor Party is so opposed to casual work. That is why I wonder why the Labor Party is so opposed to women coming back into the workforce* (Australian Hansard, Question 19, 28.03.2007).

JENNY MACKLIN (Opposition): *What is the point? You've already made up your mind* (Australian Hansard, Question 11, 21.03.2007).

5. Those used to embarrass, humiliate or mock a Member are very effective as they are relatively harmless, humorous and serve as a perfect device for hitting targets, e.g.:

Hon. JULIE BISHOP: *You will have to go to the naughty corner, won't you?* (Australian Hansard, Question 09, 28.02.2007).

ROBERT SERCOMBE: *Turn up your hearing aid!* (Australian Hansard, Question 03, 14.02.2007).

6. Those aiming to insult an MP. They include name calling and describing a Member's unfavourable qualities: "parliamentary insults can be regarded as attention-getters meant to shake up a political adversary into reacting

emotionally and thus revealing less flattering aspects of his/her personality, political responsibility and/or moral profile" (Ilie, 2004: 52). This type of comment does not happen very often in the House as such remarks are highly personal and offensive. Ekström (2009: 393) believes, that "[i]nterruptions always run a risk of appearing hostile, and for politicians who are concerned about their reputation as friendly and polite, interruptions must be used with this in mind". As the example below show, their authors appear to be not worried about this aspect of their reputation at all, e.g.:

Hon. BRONWYN BISHOP: *Are you doing a smart-arse act?* (Australian Hansard, Question to the Speaker 03, 12.09.2007).

Hon. JOHN HOWARD: *The sheepish Martin!* (Australian Hansard, Question 16, 07.02.2007).

Hon. PETER COSTELLO: *As I said, what a foolish question; what a foolish questioner* (Australian Hansard, Question 11, 15.08.2007).

Some scholars have noticed that exchanges of abuse and insults can be used to maintain or even create solidarity and that such rituals are often gender related (Holmes, 1995; Kasper, 1990). Thus, certain groups, mainly young males, engage more in aggressive and competitive linguistic behaviour, including

insults (Kuiper, 1991; Labov, 1972). Briggs (1996a) noticed that the male ‘leaders’ tend to control access to the floor, ask questions, determine when each narrator must stop speaking, and impose decisions. Shaw (2000) believes, that women in the Parliament appear to be much less comfortable with illegal interventions. Harris shows in her research (2001) that the majority of participants in the Prime Minister’s Question Time in the British House of Commons are indeed men. These observations were supported by the analysis in this work as well.

7. Those showing positive attitude towards other MPs’ words, actions. They are not always sincere comments. In fact, in many cases, especially if the comment is directed at the opponents, it will be mockery hidden behind politeness. De Ayala claims, that “Parliamentary language, and more specifically politeness strategies become the vehicle of what will be called ‘parliamentary institutionalized hypocrisy’: anything – or almost anything – can be said, provided that it is formulated with the appropriate degree of politeness” (De Ayala, 2001: 150), etc.:

Hon. PETER COSTELLO: *For Lilley, sorry. Thank you for correcting me, Member for Melbourne. You would not want this bullet to go off on anyone other than him, would you?* (Australian Hansard, Question 06, 21.03.2007).

8. Other, e.g.:

a) Comments addressed to the Speaker. There are not as many of those as in the New Zealand Parliament because the Australian Speaker tends to stop any unofficial communication. The pronoun '*you*' is used when talking to the Speaker, e.g.:

Hon. GARY HARDGRAVE: *Mr. Speaker, would you, in the consideration of the member for Grayndler's request to you, acquaint yourself with the Courier-Mail of 9 March this year?* (Australian Hansard, Question to the Speaker 01, 12.09.2007).

LINDSAY TANNER: *Why is it okay for him to say it, but it's not okay for me?* (Australian Hansard, Question 06, 19.09.2007).

- Comments indicating in an unofficial way to the Speaker that a ruling is required. These utterances can be heard relatively seldom in the House and most of them would be from the Government MPs as the Speaker did not tolerate such behaviour from the Opposition Members. However, some Opposition MPs, like Hon. Anthony Albanese, do risk prompting the Speaker that his interruption is required and e.g.:

Hon. PETER COSTELLO (Government): *The unit of production from the seat of Lilley interjects* (Australian Hansard, Question 08, 28.03.2007).

ANTHONY ALBANESE (Opposition): *Are you going to keep these people in order at all, Mr. Speaker?* (Australian Hansard, Question to the Speaker 01, 20.06.2007).

- Comments providing explanations or MPs' points of view to the Speaker and the House, e.g.:

Hon. MALCOLM TURNBULL: *I am just quoting the newspaper* (Australian Hansard, Question 18, 20.06.2007).

b) Comments from the Speaker:

Mr. SPEAKER: *Members are holding up their own question time* (Australian Hansard, Question 10, 14.02.2007).

Mr. SPEAKER: *I will endeavour to uphold the standing orders, as I always do* (Australian Hansard, Question 12, 28.02.2007).

c) Unfinished comments. It was impossible to determine their type because of their unfinished nature, e.g.:

Hon. PETER COSTELLO: *It is the part of the question that asks about different models*— (Australian Hansard, Question 06, 14.02.2007).

PAUL NEVILLE: *Just wait for it, boys. What role have state—* (Australian Hansard, Question 06, 23.05.2007).

Mr. SPEAKER: *The reference to the Leader of the Opposition—* (Australian Hansard, Question 12, 15.08.2007).

d) Miscellaneous. Speculations of MPs on different topics, e.g.:

Hon. JOHN HOWARD: *I do not know what all the fuss is about* (Australian Hansard, Question 7, 23.05.2007).

Hon. PETER COSTELLO: *How can I confirm what happens when I am not present? What a ridiculous question. Can you confirm my walk down the street after you left the parliament last night, Mr. Speaker?* (Australian Hansard, Question 11, 15.08.2007).

	No. of comments and interruptions	**To request or provide more information**	**To criticize an MP / Party or their attitude**	**To show disbelief**	**To show disapproval**	**To embarrass, humiliate or mock at an MP**	**To insult an MP using swear words**	**To show positive attitude toward other MPs' words, actions, etc.**	**Other**
Liberal	**99**	16	9	2	4	2	5	1	60
Labor	**70**	15	12	5	7	8		3	20
National	**4**	1							3
Country Liberal									
Independent									
Anonymous	**12**	1	4			5			2
Total:	**185**	**33**	**25**	**7**	**11**	**15**	**5**	**4**	**85**

Table 11: Number and types of comments and interruptions uttered by different parties MPs in the Australian Parliament in 2007.

The table shows that, in spite of the Speaker's strict ruling, the Australian MPs find ways to exchange comments and attack each other. Especially active were Government MPs who had the Speaker's support. Rasiah (2007a: 99) believes, that "the Speaker is not impartial and remains a member of the ruling party which selected him/her for the post, thereby favouring the Government in his/her rulings" because even the Standing Orders "tend to favour the Government rather than the Opposition" (Rodan, 1983: 138). Thus, the Government MPs were even allowed to play guess games during Question Time and verbally attack the Opposition MPs without any interference from the Speaker, as shown in the example below:

> **Hon. PETER COSTELLO (Government):** [...] *I quote: When the history of this parliament, this nation and this century is written, 30 June 1999 will be recorded as a day of fundamental injustice—an injustice which is real, an injustice which is not simply conjured up by the fleeting rhetoric of politicians. It will be recorded as the day when the social compact that has governed this nation for the last 100 years was torn up. Who said those words?*
>
> **Hon. JOE HOCKEY (Government):** *Churchill.*
>
> **Hon. PETER COSTELLO (Government):** *No, it was not Churchill.*
>
> **Hon. TONY ABBOTT (Government):** *FDR.*
>
> **Hon. PETER COSTELLO (Government):** *No, it was not Roosevelt.*
>
> **Hon. JOE HOCKEY (Government):** *John Kennedy.*

Hon. PETER COSTELLO (Government): *No, it was not Kennedy.*

Hon. TONY ABBOTT (Government): *The Dalai Lama.*

Hon. PETER COSTELLO (Government): *It was not the Dalai Lama. This was said in the parliament—that this was not 'fleeting rhetoric', that this was 'a day of fundamental injustice'. Who said those words? None other than the Leader of the Opposition, the economic conservative. The 'day of fundamental injustice' was when we swept away wholesale sales tax, financial institutions duty, bank account debits tax, stamp duties on share transactions, when we cut income tax rates, when we increased thresholds—that was 'a day of fundamental injustice'. Now he says it is a myth to claim that Labor has no tax policy because the tax policy is the Beazley tax policy of 2005. When you are getting ready, seriously, to engage in a policy discussion, the Australian people are entitled to look at it and know what it means, but this is not an opposition that is anywhere near that point* (Australian Hansard, Question 10, 13.06.2007).

As it is the case with the New Zealand parliament, the most active are long-serving MPs, with the Prime Minister, Hon. John Howard, at the top of the list (27 comments, 33 years in the Parliament), followed by Hon. Tony Abbott (Government MP, 13 years in the Parliament, 21 comments) and the Treasurer, Hon. Peter Costello (Government MP, 17 years in the Parliament, 14 comments and interruptions). The most active Opposition MP was Anthony Albanese, the Manager of Opposition Business (11 years in the Parliament), with 11 comments and interjections.

5.7. Speaker's ruling

5.7.1. New Zealand

As has been stated above, the Speaker plays an important role in running sittings of the Parliament. His / her role may be compared with the role of the master of ceremony who "creates art from the ensemble of media and codes, just as a conductor in the single genre of classical music blends and opposes the sounds of the different instruments to produce an often unrepeatable effect" (Turner, 1986a: 23). Part of the Speaker's role is to maintain order in the House. Bloch believes, that "political communication is split into two or more codes of different formality. The more formal code is used to handle and reinforce the static order [...] while political manipulation is handled by a different code" (Bloch, 1975: 26). Thus, the most common type of Speaker's ruling is the word "*Order!*" said loudly in the House when the level of noise reaches an unacceptable level. Apart from that, there are other devices that the Speaker uses to bring MPs back to order.

Hon. Margaret Wilson appeared to be polite towards all the MPs in the House no matter what party they belonged to. She would form her utterances so that they sounded more like requests rather than demands or orders, e.g.:

> **Madam SPEAKER:** *Keep the noise level down, please* (NZ Hansard, Question 10, 13.02.2008).

This research has identified 293 cases of Speaker's ruling mentioned in the Hansard. They include the utterance "*Order!*" which was listed only once in the Hansard although video recordings of Question Time show that it was uttered at least every few minutes.

All the identified utterances fall under the following categories:

1. Directions to Members to return to the usual Question Time routine after the normal flow of Question Time was interrupted (43), e.g.:

Madam SPEAKER: *Now that we have established that members not in the Chamber are catching flights, could we please have the answer to the question* (NZ Hansard, Question 11, 23.07.2008).

Madam SPEAKER: *I know that it is members' day, but perhaps we could now have the Minister's answer—if she can remember the question* (NZ Hansard, Question 04, 21.05.2008).

2. Rulings requesting / inquiring whether the Minister wants to add to their answer, which often sound as suggestions rather than directives (13), e.g.:

Madam SPEAKER: *Perhaps the Minister would like to add to his answer in a way that is consistent with the Standing Orders* (NZ Hansard, Question 1, 05.03.2008).

3. Rulings indicating to MPs that the previous utterance did / did not have the correct format / contents, etc. Sometimes the Speaker fails to determine whether the format of an utterance was (in)correct (34), e.g.:

Madam SPEAKER: *I am not sure about the latter part of the question; the Minister will address the first part* (NZ Hansard, Question 03, 28.05.2008).

Madam SPEAKER: *That is not a point of order, Mr. Brownlee. Points of order that are not points of order and that are repeated create disorder* (NZ Hansard, Question 4, 20.02.2008).

Madam SPEAKER: *This is a long answer, Minister* (NZ Hansard, Question 12, 02.04.2008).

4. Speaker's rulings on whether the question was addressed, usually presented by Madam Speaker as one of the possible opinions rather than a finite statement (43), e.g.:

Madam SPEAKER: *I think the member was right that the Minister did answer the question in a very roundabout way* (NZ Hansard, Question 03, 28.05.2008).

Madam SPEAKER: *I get the point. But the Minister did address the question; we should be grateful for that* (NZ Hansard, Question 05, 06.08.2008).

5. Rulings requesting silence in the Chamber (21), e.g.:

Madam SPEAKER: *If the Minister could have been heard in silence, then maybe what he was saying would be better understood* (NZ Hansard, Question 12, 25.06.2008).

Madam SPEAKER: *The chipping across the Chamber when Barbara Stewart was trying to ask her question was unacceptable. If the member had not got to his feet, I was about to. We will now hear Barbara Stewart's question in silence* (NZ Hansard, Question 06, 12.03.2008).

6. Rulings indicating that the Minister is / is not responsible for the issue raised in the question (10), e.g.:

Madam SPEAKER: *The Minister is not responsible for National Party policy, but he may respond generally around the issue at that time* (NZ Hansard, Question 10, 13.02.2008).

Madam SPEAKER: *Please be seated. I rule the question out of order because it is not within ministerial responsibility; it is more of a matter of debate* (NZ Hansard, Question 08, 21.05.2008).

7. Rulings requesting MPs to withdraw their latest utterance and apologise, usually uttered in a very polite manner (19), e.g.:

Madam SPEAKER: *My apologies. Would whoever offended whom please apologise so that we can move on* (NZ Hansard, Question 10, 16.04.2008).

Madam SPEAKER: *The Minister has asked for you to please withdraw and apologise for making that comment. So would you please do so* (NZ Hansard, Question 04, 19.03.2008).

8. General directions / suggestions / warnings / comments to MPs (42), e.g.:

Madam SPEAKER: *I agree. The same rules are that you get a warning; another interjection and you are out* (NZ Hansard, Question 11, 02.04.2008).

Madam SPEAKER: *I do note that, but I also note that Ministers are required to respond to only one question in a supplementary question and to do so succinctly* (NZ Hansard, Question 07, 02.04.2008).

Madam SPEAKER: *I would ask members, when they trade their supplementary questions, to give me notice of that fact before they rise to their feet* (NZ Hansard, Question 01, 02.07.2008).

9. Explanations provided by the Speaker on her previous rulings or on other matters in the House. Although questions to the Speaker are not allowed in the House, New Zealand MPs question the Speaker's rulings quite often and sometimes the Speaker finds it necessary to answer these questions (38), e.g.:

Madam SPEAKER: *Thank you. I have warned members that long explanations, when they are tabling documents, are unnecessary. However, it is necessary to be able to identify the document, and that is what I listened for* (NZ Hansard, Question 01, 05.03.2008).

Madam SPEAKER: *Yes, I must confess that I would be tempted to call the next question, but we will have one more go* (NZ Hansard, Question 08, 09.04.2008).

10. Rulings directing MPs to leave the Chamber / resume their seat / rephrase their question, etc. Although this type of Speaker's rulings requires some firmness, but similarly to the other types of rulings these utterances are extremely polite and contain words 'please' and 'thank you' (30), e.g.:

Madam SPEAKER: *Please be seated. Members, **please** refrain from discussing or commenting on the question until we have heard it in total. Please start again* (NZ Hansard, Question 04, 05.03.2008).

> **Madam SPEAKER:** *Would the member like to rephrase his question so that it is consistent with the Standing Orders.* ***Thank you*** (NZ Hansard, Question 11, 19.03.2008).

The statistics shows that most frequently the Speaker has to give her rulings to bring the Question Time routine back to order (43) and to judge whether the question was addressed (43). These are followed by rulings giving general directions, suggestions, warnings, comments to MPs (42) and explanations provided by the Speaker on her previous rulings or on other matters in the House (38). The last two groups of rulings are unnecessary and take up a lot of time.

5.7.2. Australia

The number of Speaker's rulings utterances in the Australian Parliament is considerably higher than in the New Zealand Parliament (371 as compared to 293). This can be explained by personal qualities of the Speaker and the style of ruling. Hon. David Hawker tried his best to prevent or stop any unauthorised

activity in the House. Thus, almost one third of his rulings started with the word "Order" (138 out of 371). Also, none of his rulings were of a suggestive type, neither did he thank the Members for following his directions.

The following types of utterances were identified in the speech of the Australian Speaker:

1. Directions to the Members to avoid unparliamentary language and / or follow the rules (26). Surprisingly, this type of ruling was not presented at all in the New Zealand Parliament, e.g.:

   Mr. SPEAKER: *Order! In calling the Prime Minister, I would ask the Leader of the Opposition not to use the word 'you'* (Australian Hansard, Question 05, 07.02.2007)

   Mr. SPEAKER: *Order! The Prime Minister will refer to members by their seat* (Australian Hansard, Question 05, 07.02.2007)

   Mr. SPEAKER: *The member will not reflect on the chair* (Australian Hansard, Question 05, 07.02.2007)

2. Directions to Members to return to the usual Question Time routine after the normal flow of Question Time was interrupted (86), e.g.:

Mr. SPEAKER: *Members will come to order. The Prime Minister has been asked a question and the Prime Minister will be heard* (Australian Hansard, Question 03, 13.06.2007)

Mr. SPEAKER: *The Leader of the House raises a valid point of order. The Manager of Opposition Business will come to his question. He will not continue to debate* (Australian Hansard, Question to Speaker 01, 07.02.2007)

3. Rulings stating that a Member who has the call is in order or their question or answer is in order (31). Usually the Australian Speaker would fully and unconditionally support the Members of the Government Party and find fault with the Opposition Party Members, e.g.:

Mr. SPEAKER: *I have been listening carefully to the Treasurer. I believe he may well have been responding to an interjection, and he certainly is in order—but I would not encourage anyone to interject* (Australian Hansard, Question 08, 07.02.2007)

Mr. SPEAKER: *The Prime Minister has hardly begun to answer the question. He is entirely in order and he will be heard* (Australian Hansard, Question 03, 14.02.2007)

4. Warnings to MPs that their behaviour was inappropriate and they may be punished if they continue to misbehave. The Speaker gives only one warning to a Member. If the Member continues to break rules, the

Speaker orders him to remove himself from the Chamber. 'Warnings' is the biggest group of rulings which makes up almost one third of all the Speaker's utterances (114 = 30.7%).This type of ruling was not found in the speech of the New Zealand Speaker, e.g.:

Mr. SPEAKER: *Order! The member for Melbourne is warned!* (Australian Hansard, Question 08, 07.02.2007)

Mr. SPEAKER: *I name the member for Brisbane!* (Australian Hansard, Question 14, 14.02.2007)

Some warnings may sound quite threatening:

Mr. SPEAKER: *Order! I have had to take action with the member for Melbourne every sitting day this year. I give him a very clear warning: if he continues to interrupt I will deal with him very severely* (Australian Hansard, Question 03, 14.02.2007)

5. Rulings requesting silence in the Chamber (11), e.g.:

Mr. SPEAKER: *Order! The level of interjections is far too high. The Prime Minister will be heard or I will take action* (Australian Hansard, Question 15, 23.05.2007)

6. Rulings directing MPs to remove themselves from the Chamber / resume their seat / rephrase their question, etc. (33), e.g.:

Mr. SPEAKER: *The member will resume his seat and he will not debate his point of order* (Australian Hansard, Question 12, 28.02.2007)

Mr. SPEAKER: *Order! The honourable member for Brisbane is suspended from the service of the House for 24 hours under standing order 94(b)* (Australian Hansard, Question 14, 14.02.2007)

Mr. SPEAKER: *The member for Maribyrnong will remove himself under standing order 94(a). The Prime Minister has the call and the Prime Minister will be heard* (Australian Hansard, Question 03, 14.02.2007)

7. Explanations provided by the Speaker on different matters in the House (26), e.g.:

Mr. SPEAKER: *Order! Members should be aware that when the Speaker is standing any interjection is highly disorderly. The minister has been asked a question; the minister will be heard. I call the Minister for Education, Science and Training* (Australian Hansard, Question 19, 07.02.2007)

Mr. SPEAKER: *The Manager of Opposition Business would be well aware that, if he has questions to ask of the Speaker, he will ask them at the appropriate time* (Australian Hansard, Question 09, 19.09.2007)

8. Rulings requesting MPs to provide more information or aimed to clarify some points (14). Those are not questions regarding the latest topic discussed but they are part of a highly formalised ritual performed in the House during Question Time. This category was not presented in the speech of the New Zealand Speaker, e.g.:

Mr. SPEAKER: *Does the honourable member claim to have been misrepresented?* (Australian Hansard, Personal Explanation 01, 07.02.2007)

Mr. SPEAKER: *Does the Manager of Opposition Business have the dissent in writing?* (Australian Hansard, Dissent from ruling, 19.09.2007)

9. Rulings indicating to MPs that the previous utterance did / did not have the correct format / contents, etc. (9), e.g.:

Mr. SPEAKER: *That is not a point of order* (Australian Hansard, Question 02, 14.02.2007)

Mr. SPEAKER: *The Leader of the House raises a valid point of order. The member for Lilley should be well aware that if he wants to raise a point of order he will raise a point of order; otherwise, I will deal with him* (Australian Hansard, Question 17, 15.08.2007)

10. Rulings requesting MPs to withdraw their latest remark (11). In the Australian House of Representatives MPs are not required to apologise, e.g.:

Mr. SPEAKER: *The Manager of Opposition Business is well aware that that expression is unparliamentary and he will withdraw it* (Australian Hansard, Question 12, 28.02.2007)

Some rulings contain threat in them:

Mr. SPEAKER: *The member for Melbourne will withdraw that statement or I will deal with him* (Australian Hansard, Question 06, 19.09.2007)

11. General directions / suggestions / comments to MPs (4), e.g.:

Mr. SPEAKER: *Order! The Treasurer might consider bringing his answer to a conclusion* (Australian Hansard, Question 04, 23.05.2007)

Mr. SPEAKER: *Order! In calling the Prime Minister, I think the first part of that question was asking for an opinion, but the Prime Minister may choose to answer* (Australian Hansard, Question 19, 13.06.2007)

12. Rulings indicating that the Minister is / is not responsible for the issue raised in the question (6), e.g.:

Mr. SPEAKER: *That question, as I heard it, is not within the Prime Minister's responsibilities. If the Chief Opposition Whip would like to rephrase his question, I will listen. The Prime Minister is not responsible for prices at another place in Sydney* (Australian Hansard, Question 07, 13.06.2007)

Mr. SPEAKER: *Order! The member for Lilley would be aware that that question is not within the administrative responsibilities of the Treasurer, but the Treasurer may choose to answer the question* (Australian Hansard, Question 05, 12.09.2007)

The categories above show how different the styles of Speakers' ruling are in the New Zealand and Australian Parliaments. The difference can also be explained by various issues that arise during Question Time in the two Parliaments and differences in the MPs' attitudes towards them. Thus, in the New Zealand Parliament the MPs often raise the points of relevance and argue whether a question was addressed by a Minister. Also, they quite often question the Speaker's rulings, and Margaret Wilson has to provide explanations. This

explains why the second largest group of rulings is on whether a question was addressed and the third is the Speaker's explanations.

In the Australian Parliament MPs do not possess the same degree of freedom as the New Zealand MPs, so the two biggest groups of rulings are warnings and directions to return to the usual flow of Question Time (114 and 86 utterances). The next biggest groups are rulings stating that the person who has the call is in order (31) and direction to avoid unparliamentary language and / or follow the rules (26).

5.8. Comment withdrawals and apologies

If MPs clearly insult someone, they are required to withdraw their comment and apologise but "often, a Member uses derogatory metaphors knowing that he (or sometimes she) will have to retract them, but this simply involves saying formulaically, 'I withdraw', and of course, by then, the damage is done" (Kitson, 2007). This complies with Austin's speech act theory: "to utter the sentence [...] is not to describe my doing of what I should be said in so uttering to be doing or to state that I am doing it: it is to do it". In other words, "issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action" (Austin, 1975: 8, 6).

5.8.1. New Zealand

The total number of utterances falling under the category "Comment withdrawals and apologies" in the New Zealand Parliament was 21. They can be divided into 3 sub-categories:

1. If an MP utters an unparliamentary remark, they are required to withdraw it (1), e.g.:

Hon. DAVID CUNLIFFE: *No, and I wish the member better luck with his listening skills on further questions.*

Madam SPEAKER: *No, sorry. Would the Minister please withdraw that final comment? That is exactly what creates disorder. Just address the question.*

Hon. DAVID CUNLIFFE: *I withdraw that comment* (NZ Hansard, Question 01, 05.03.2008).

2. If an MP utters an unparliamentary remark and another MP takes offence then the offender is required to withdraw the comment and apologise (19), e.g.:

Hon. ANNETTE KING*: I can confirm that there have been increases in violence in New Zealand. I can also confirm that most of it is driven by reported domestic violence. I have to say to the member that I am very concerned that the National Party has joined the domestic violence deniers, because it is not—[Interruption] This is a serious issue,*

because whenever the National Party talks about violent crime, it wants to discount domestic violence. As long as that party discounts domestic violence we will never get on top of it, because those members are supposed to be political leaders. We have seen massive increases in reported domestic violence in New Zealand. We ought to be—

Hon. BILL ENGLISH: *I raise a point of order, Madam Speaker. Clearly any member of Parliament from any party would find the Minister's allegation that MPs of that party endorsed domestic violence deeply offensive. I ask that she withdraw and apologise.*

Madam SPEAKER*: The Minister has been asked to withdraw and apologise.*

Hon. ANNETTE KING: *I withdraw and apologise* (NZ Hansard, Question 05, 02.04.2008).

3. If an MP has broken rules, than they have to apologise (1), e.g.:

Madam SPEAKER: *Please be quiet. As Mr. Brownlee knows—and I have ruled on this before—if members notify me of a change in the allocation of supplementary questions, that is fine. If I am notified by parties of that before the member rises to his or her feet, there is no embarrassment—everybody knows. I had not been notified of Mr. Hide's supplementary question.*

RODNEY HIDE: *I apologise* (NZ Hansard, Question 01, 02.07.2008).

5.8.2. Australia

This research has found three times fewer utterances of this kind in the Australian House of Representatives (7 compared to 21 in the New Zealand Parliament). This fact can be explained by the stricter rules of behaviour in the Australian Parliament. All the discovered utterances fall under the same sub-category 'If an MP utters an unparliamentary remark, they are required to withdraw it'. When withdrawing comments Australian MPs are not required to apologise, e.g.:

> **BRONWYN BISHOP:** *Are you doing a smart-arse act?*
>
> **CATHERINE KING:** *Did you just hear what she said? That is unparliamentary language. She said 'smart-arse'.*
>
> **Mr. SPEAKER:** *If the member for Mackellar used an unparliamentary word, she will withdraw it.*
>
> **BRONWYN BISHOP:** *If the word is unparliamentary, of course I withdraw it.*
>
> **TONY ABBOTT:** *If the member for Ballarat used the same term, she should also withdraw.*
>
> **CATHERINE KING:** *I did not yell it out; I was just telling him what it was.*
>
> **TONY ABBOTT:** *She said it very audibly and she should withdraw also.*
>
> **CATHERINE KING:** *I withdraw* (Australian Hansard, Question to the Speaker 3, 12.09.2007)

5.9. Personal explanations

Personal explanations are widely presented in the Australian Parliament where time is assigned for them in the end of every Question Time session. I have identified 10 personal explanations. All of them follow a strict pattern:

> **MP**: *Mr. Speaker, I seek leave to make a personal explanation.*
>
> **Mr. SPEAKER***: Does the honourable member claim to have been misrepresented?*
>
> **MP**: *Yes.*
>
> **Mr. SPEAKER***: Please proceed.*
>
> **MP**: [where]+[explanation], e.g.:

> **KELVIN THOMSON**: *Mr. Speaker, I seek leave to make a personal explanation.*
>
> **Mr. SPEAKER:** *Does the honourable member claim to have been misrepresented?*
>
> **KELVIN THOMSON:** *Yes, Mr. Speaker, in two newspaper articles.*
>
> **Mr. SPEAKER:** *Please proceed.*
>
> **KELVIN THOMSON:** *Monday's Australian stated that I had addressed a dinner held at the Coburg Town Hall on Saturday night. I attended the dinner in my electorate. I was surprised by the appearance of Jack Thomas, whose attendance I had no prior knowledge of. I had not attended to provide moral support to Mr. Thomas. I left the dinner soon after: well before the speeches: and I did not address the audience. It also follows that a newspaper article in the Daily Telegraph alleging I was associating with Mr. Thomas is also incorrect* (Australian Hansard, Personal Explanation 1, 23.05.2007).

Sometimes the explanation part may contain a formulaic starter:

I believe I have been personally misrepresented and defamed (1).

I claim to be misrepresented by the claims made in those remarks (1).

In the New Zealand Parliament personal explanations take place in the course of questions. I have found only one personal explanation made by a New Zealand MP in 2008:

> **KEITH LOCKE:** *I wish to make a personal explanation. I assure the House that I have never supported the Chinese regime—the one-party State—in its activities during the Cultural Revolution or at any other time. I ask the Minister to withdraw and apologise* (NZ Hansard, Question 03, 19.03.2008).

5.10. Questions to the Speaker

In the end of each Question Time session Australian MPs have an opportunity to ask questions of the House Speaker. Usually the Opposition MPs question the Speaker about his rulings during the day. I have identified 24 questions to the Speaker in the Australian Parliament in 2007. The largest number of questions during one session was five on February, 28, 2007.

> **LINDSAY TANNER:** *Mr. Speaker, I have a question about the warning that you issued to me earlier on today. It seemed to imply that the impact of a warning on a previous day could somehow flow through to subsequent sitting days. Could you*

clarify whether when a member receives a warning on another sitting day that may be the basis on which they could be ejected without a warning being issued to them on the day on which you seek to eject them?

Mr. SPEAKER: *I think, if the member for Melbourne had listened carefully to what I said to him before, he would have noted that I said that I have either given him a warning or taken action every sitting day this year. Given that, and given the way I gave him his warning today, I think he ought to reflect carefully on what I said.*

LINDSAY TANNER: *With due respect, I have reflected carefully on what you have said and that is why I asked you a question.*

Mr. SPEAKER: *I thank the member for Melbourne and I have given him a response* (Australian Hansard, Question to the Speaker 01, 14.02.2007).

In the New Zealand Parliament no questions to the Speaker are allowed but Members find ways to ask them. Usually they use points of order for questioning the Speaker on her rulings, for making some points clear or for mocking. I have found 10 cases of questions to the Speaker in the New Zealand Parliament in 2008.

1. Utterances questioning the Speaker's rulings (3). New Zealand MPs do not show the same amount of respect when talking to the Speaker as Australian MPs and quite often MPs' criticism is aimed at the Speaker and her rulings. Although MPs are well aware of the fact that it is unacceptable, they still use every opportunity to do that, e.g.:

GERRY BROWNLEE: *I raise a point of order, Madam Speaker. In what way was Mr. Harawira's question inconsistent with the Standing Orders? Given the comments made by the Deputy Prime Minister this afternoon about another member's past involvements, what he was up to, and all the rest of it, which for many of us seemed to be an imputation against that member's motives, what was so wrong with what Mr. Harawira just said?* (NZ Hansard, Question 11, 19.03.2008).

2. Utterances for making some points clear (4), e.g.:

GERRY BROWNLEE: *I raise a point of order, Madam Speaker. If Mr. Peters can use an example—an unintelligible example, actually; Lewis Carroll would have been better—to try to answer his question, why cannot Mr. Hide use the same process for getting an answer to his question?* (NZ Hansard, Question 05, 06.08.2008).

3. Mockery (3), e.g.:

RODNEY HIDE: *I raise a point of order, Madam Speaker. If the Minister has answered that part, could you share with the House who is responsible?* (NZ Hansard, Question 08, 13.02.2008).

5.11. Additional answers

This category of utterances is only presented in the Australian Parliament where at the end of Question Time Ministers may provide some additional information regarding the answer that they gave earlier that day. This type of utterance is not very popular among the Ministers because of the reasons behind it. Ministers may want to add to their answer either because they were not very well prepared for the question and could not provide a sufficient answer, or they needed some time for collecting additional information.

Thus, there were 3 additional answers in 2007 in the Australian Federal Parliament. Two of the answers were given by the Prime Minister Howard and one by the Treasurer.

Ministers start additional answers with a formulaic utterance *'Mr. Speaker, I seek the indulgence of the chair to add to an answer'.* It is followed by the Speaker's permission to proceed: '*The minister may proceed'*.

6. The closing stage of Question Time

In the Australian Parliament it is the Prime Minister who decides when it is time to finish the question period. The following phrase *"Mr. Speaker, I ask that further questions be placed on the Notice Paper"* is the signal for the Speaker that the last question for the day has just been answered. However, questions to

the Speaker and additional answers follow this phrase, so strictly speaking they are not part of Question Time.

As the number of questions is always the same for each Question Time session in the New Zealand Parliament, there is no need for the Prime Minister to signal the end of Question Time. After the last question has been answered, the New Zealand Speaker says: *"Any further supplementaries? No further supplementaries. Then we've come to the end of the time for questions for oral answer"*.

7. Summary of Chapter 5

This research has identified a number of differences in the Question Time procedures in the New Zealand and Australian Parliaments. "The employment of various forms of action which structure the ritual, each bringing with it different meanings and a different definition of reality, enables communication and the construction of meaning and involves the participants in a single experience, transforming individual experience and bringing particular and universal together" (McAllister, 2006: 69).

The following differences have been identified. Firstly, in spite of the similar settings in the House, the procedures of asking and answering questions are

different. In the New Zealand House MPs rise to their feet and ask / answer questions from their seat, whereas in Australia MPs need to approach the central table to ask / answer questions.

Secondly, as can be seen from the table below, New Zealand MPs were more active than the Australian Members during Question Time as the number of utterances from the former is higher in all the categories except for the main questions and answers. The larger proportion of these types of utterances from the Australian MPs can be explained by the fact that there are no supplementary questions and answers in Australia and thus, all questions and answers are referred to the category of main utterances. The only other category that has more utterances in the Australian Parliament than that in the New Zealand House of Representatives is Speaker's rulings, as according to the earlier examples David Hawker was much stricter than Margaret Wilson.

Type of utterance	**Total number of utterances**		**Average number of words**		**The largest number of words in the completed utterances**		**The smallest number of words in the completed utterances**	
	NZ House in 2008	**Australian House in 2007**	**NZ House**	**Australian House**	**NZ House**	**Australian House**	**NZ House**	**Australian House**
Main Questions	228 (incl. interrupted questions)	305 (incl. interrupted questions)	25.7	57.2	82	248	8	22
Main Answers	227 (incl. interrupted answers)	469 (incl. interrupted answers)	61.7	222.6	369	1104	1	5
Supplementary	1226 (incl.	13	52.8	6	157	15	3	3

questions	interrupted questions)							
Supplementary answers	1277 (incl. interrupted answers)	17 (incl. interrupted answers)	65.8	236.9	227	832	1	15
Points of Order	206 (incl. interrupted points of order)	111 (incl. interrupted points of order)	55.8	35.2	163	78	13	9
Interruptions and comments	286 (both interruptions and comments)	185 (both interruptions and comments)	16.4	18.5	128	375	1	1
Speaker's rulings	293	371	26.4	14.7	125	121	1	1
Comment withdrawal (and apology)	21	7	9.4	23	59	100	2	2
Questions to the Speaker	10	24	n/a[11]	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Additional answers	0	3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Table 12: Comparative statistics of different types of utterances in the New Zealand and Australian Parliaments.

Thirdly, according to the table, utterances by the Australian MPs were longer than those by New Zealand MPs as there was no time limit on them.

The other difference lies in the types of questions that MPs ask. Whereas New Zealand MPs tend to ask main questions that lie either in the sphere of their interests or relate to their parliamentary portfolio, the Australian MPs, on the other hand, question the Ministers on all the current topics of the day.

[11] Such criteria as average number of words, the largest and the smallest number of words in the utterances are not applicable for such categories as Questions to the Speaker and Additional answers as for the Australian Parliament Questions to the Speaker and Additional answers consist of dialogues between several people, and for the New Zealand Parliament there are no categories "Additional answers" and "Questions to the Speaker" and all the utterances for the latter were accounted under the "Points of Order" category.

Also, although more interruptions were made by the New Zealand Members than by their Australian colleagues, the character of interruptions and comments is milder and more sophisticated in the New Zealand Parliament due to the fact that the Speaker allows MPs a great deal of freedom in the House, and interruptions sometimes turn into longer discussions with numerous comment withdrawals and apologies. In the Australian House Members often make short unparliamentary comments as the Speaker's reaction to those is immediate and stern.

The forms of address also differ in the two Parliaments. In the New Zealand House only when the Speaker calls a Minister to answer a question then she names their ministerial portfolio, e.g. "*I call the Minister of Health*". In other cases only Members' full names with the title Honourable, if applicable, are used: "*Rt. Hon. Winston Peters*". In the Australian Parliament only titles should be used.

Among the similarities I can name the following features. Firstly, the time is set for Question periods in both Parliaments. Then, there are strict rules and procedures for MPs to follow. In both Parliaments open conflicts are strictly censured and disagreement is expressed indirectly. MPs find ways to abide by the rules and use unparliamentary language in a polite way to reach their

political goals. A Speaker runs Question Time sessions, maintains order and punishes offenders.

Chapter 6: GENRELECTS

1. Introduction

In order to understand Question Time as a genre it is necessary to examine and compare the discourses of the New Zealand and Australian Parliamentary discourse communities. While doing so, it is important to keep in mind the fact that communicative genres are complex by nature: "the inner structure of communicative genres […] consists of rather diverse elements: words and phrases selected from different registers, formulae and entire formulaic blocks; rhetorical forms and tropes, stylistic devices, metric and melodic forms rhymes, adjectival and nominal lists, oppositions etc." (Bergmann & Luckmann, 1995: 292). These discourse features make up linguistic context of use.

"The external structure of communicative genres" on the other hand "exhibits a certain degree of obligation, that is, constraints with respect to milieus, the communicative situation, the type of social relationship as well as social categories of actors (men, women, ethnic groups), relevant in such environments'(Guenther & Knoblauch, 1995: 8). These are referred to as non-linguistic factors.

Chapters 4 and 5 of this work have provided a description of external elements of Question Time genre, namely the historic and ethnographic overview of

Question Time ritual in the Australian Federal and New Zealand Parliaments, rules regulating interactions between the participants of this particular discourse community and limitations on language use. The present section will look at the inner structure of the genre and outline the linguistic and genre-specific factors of Parliamentary Question Time discourse in New Zealand and Australia focussing on its phraseology.

2. Research material

As mentioned before, only Wednesday Question Time sessions in a year leading to general elections in the Australian Federal and New Zealand Parliaments were selected for this research. The total number of sitting days in each of the two Parliaments was different (19 in New Zealand and 14 in Australia), as was difference in the average number of questions per a Question Time session (12 in New Zealand and 20.5 in Australia). However, in the joint parliamentary corpus of 338,673 tokens the proportions for New Zealand Parliament data and Australian Parliament data are 52.95% to 47.05% (179,358 tokens to 159,315 accordingly). The total of 60 PLIs were selected from the Parliamentary Question Time corpus with the help of WordSmith software (as described in Chapter 3). They were divided into two main groups according to the Question Time participants: the Speaker of the House and MPs.

The Speakers of the two Houses are given a special category because their utterances are wholly different from those of the rest of the House. The Speaker's role in the Chamber is to maintain order, to provide transitions from one activity to the other or from one Member to the other, and to punish for improper conduct, whereas MPs' role is to take part in the House discussions by means of asking and/or answering questions. The latter leads to further subdivision of MPs into Ministers (those who answer questions) and other MPs (those who ask questions). Occasionally there may be interchanges between the members of the two subcategories when Ministers ask questions of other Ministers or when non-Ministers answer questions on behalf of the absent Ministers. In addition there is a third category to which both Ministers and non-Ministers will belong if / when they raise a point of order.

It is possible to break the categories down further. For example, it is worthwhile taking into account Members' gender, the length of their service in the House, political parties they belong to. The use of database software allows the programme to be used to search in the mentioned above fields in search of trends in the use of formulaic expressions (see the table Stats of the database).

All the PLIs selected for this research are concerned with external genre structure, i.e. they are restricted to use in the Parliament only. That means that one can only come across these expressions while listening / watching the

Parliamentary proceeding, reading the Hansard transcripts or reading specialised literature / reports on the work of Parliament. For instance, it is unlikely that one will hear the expression "*I withdraw my comment and apologise for it*" in everyday talk or even in course of a formal meeting.

One may think that the expression "*What reports [if any] has he / she received…*" is not restricted to parliamentary discourse only. However, the use of the third person singular pronoun when addressing a person indicates highly formalized and restricted use for this PLI.

The PLI "*The NP will resume his / her seat*" is not only restricted to the use in the Parliament but it can only be uttered by one person – the Speaker of the Australian Federal House of Representatives Hon. David Hawker. The same idea would be worded quite differently by the New Zealand Parliament Speaker – "*Would the NP [please] be seated*".

Bakhtin (1986) believes, that rather than being neutral vessels for conveying meanings, words are products of linguistic and social 'heteroglossia' – words invoke genres, styles, speakers, writers, settings, institutions, occupations, and ideologies with which they are associated. Thus, the selected PLIs are almost solely formulae used in the execution of Standing Orders and those used for asking / answering questions. That is interesting in itself because it means that

MPs do not use specialised phrasal material when they are speaking at Question Time except for the reasons listed above. One reason for this is the normal observation that PLIs are infrequent anyway and one needs huge corpora to get any frequencies which are above chance. That makes the high frequency of the specialised formulae the more remarkable.

3. Formulaic language

The linguistic research conducted during the last few decades showed a shift of focus from Chomsky's generative grammar (1957, 1965), which attempted to give a set of rules that will correctly predict which combinations of words will form grammatical sentences to the "lexical patterning" approach (Schmitt, 2004), to a different approach where scholars look at the nature of various lexical patterns such as idioms, collocations, sentences stems, etc. The latter approach is often based on corpus evidence.

These scholars (Kuiper, 2009; Moon, 1998; Schmitt, 2004; J. M. Sinclair, 1991; Wray, 2002) believe, that in course of their lives native speakers of a language acquire a large number of fixed or semi-fixed lexical expressions and store them in memory as single lexical units without analysing the meaning of each constituent they are made of. They often term them "formulaic sequences". Wray (2002: 9) defines a formulaic sequence as "a sequence, continuous or

discontinuous, of words or other elements, which is, or appears to be prefabricated: that is, stored and retrieved whole from memory at the time of use, rather than being subject to generation or analysis by the language grammar".

The number of formulaic sequences learned and stored in speakers' memory is enormous. Erman and Warren (2000) claim, that formulaic sequences of various types make up about 58.6% of the spoken English discourse they analysed and about 52.3% of the written discourse. However, these figures are not exact and may change over the course of time because, as Wray (2002: 101) says, the store of formulaic sequences is dynamic and is constantly changing to meet the needs of the speaker. Kuiper (2004: 45) believes, that "since […] functionally-based formulae have relatively fixed conditions of use, a number of things should follow. If there is a major social upheaval, one would expect the formulae which existed before the upheaval to change in various ways. They might change their form to indicate that they are different from those that existed before the upheaval; some formula may disappear altogether; others may undergo changes to their conditions of use".

Formulaic strings differ in length, composition and fixedness of their forms. They vary from idioms, proverbs and sayings, which are fully fixed in form and can bypass the entire grammatical construction process (Bateson, 1975: 61) to

more flexible expressions termed “semipreconstructed phrases” (Wray, 2002: 7), which require the insertion of morphological detail and / or open class items, normally referential ones. This type of formulaic sequences can have slots to enable flexibility of use, but slots will typically have some semantic constraints (Schmitt & Carter, 2004: 7). This type of formulaic sequences is more widely used by speakers of a language because of its flexibility and adaptability to various discourse situations. Kuiper says in (2004: 51), that one should differentiate between formulae and phrasal lexical items (PLIs) because “formulae are indexed for particular conditions of use, [so] they will appear only in situations where such conditions are appropriate”. Formulae are a subset of PLIs which may “appear in all kinds of speech and do not have specific speech functions”.

Thus, PLIs that were selected for this research are formulae, as their use is restricted to parliamentary discourse. All of them belong to the second type of formulaic sequences, i.e. semipreconstructed units, because parliamentary discourse lacks contextually restricted fixed formulae such as idioms, proverbs and sayings. Although one may come across a few idioms or sayings in the speeches of MPs, they can hardly be regarded as being typical of parliamentary discourse because of their low frequency of occurrence in MPs’ language. Besides, proverbs and sayings are more typical of everyday speech. As for the

semipreconstructed lexical units, they are widely used by MPs in discussions of various topics in the debating Chambers.

Although a number of PLIs of a general nature with non-restricted conditions of use were selected from the corpus, their frequencies of occurrence were not statistically significant. This means that even though MPs do use such expressions in their parliamentary speeches, their use is rather random, unless an MP gives preference to a certain everyday expression and uses it more often than other MPs. In this case though, it would be more appropriate to talk about such an expression belonging to an MP's idiolect rather that it being a characteristic feature of parliamentary discourse: "[e]very speaker has an idiolect, just as every collectivity of speakers has a dialect" (Bolinger & Sears, 1981: 194).

To sum up, to be a parliamentary discourse specific formula, a PLI needs to have restricted conditions of use and high frequency of occurrence in the speech of the discourse community participants. If MPs start using a particular expression in their everyday routine, it is likely to become a parliamentary formula because formulaic language only becomes formulaic through repeated use (Kuiper, 2009). Wilson (2011: 172) expresses a similar idea by saying: "it is repetition over time that determines a formulaic practice for performing […] rituals, further enhancing their ritualistic nature".

4. Dialects

Genres are represented differently in various cultures. “If we take communicative genres as socially constructed solutions which organize, routinize, and standardize the dealing with particular communicative problems, it seems quite obvious that different cultures may construct different solutions for specific communicative problems” (Guenther & Knoblauch, 1995: 6). This research proposes that within a broad notion of the parliamentary genre there are regional dialects (Australia vs. New Zealand), idiolects (Australian Speaker dialect, New Zealand Speaker dialect), genderlects (men vs. women), etc., because “[g]enres are not linguistic or social straightjackets. They allow for variation. That variation can be idiolectal, geographic, social, ethnic and diachronic” (Kuiper, 2009: ix).

4.1. Regional dialects

In spite of the fact that English is acknowledged to be the most dominant and widely used global language, it is more appropriate to talk about “world Englishes, rather than English as a single monolithic variety of English” (Bhatia, 2001: 74). There are many dialects of English in the world characteristic of particular geographic regions which are defined by Hughes and Trudgill (1996: 9) as “varieties [of a language] distinguished from each other by

differences of grammar and vocabulary". Those differences arise as a result of cultural, economic, social and technological trends in countries.

Preston (1993: 2) sees dialects not only as the regional distribution of language, but also as the varieties of language which are constrained and are appropriate to such variables as setting, purpose, role, gender, ethnicity, art, and others. In other words he believes genre to be an undeniable part of dialects.

As was shown in Chapter 4, initially parliamentary traditions in Australia and New Zealand had a common origin – the Westminster model of a Parliament. However, in the course of their development both Parliaments deviated from the original model and established their own parliamentary traditions. Although the general settings of the two Parliaments still imitate the Westminster Chambers, some parliamentary procedures and language norms have changed to reflect the culture and traditions of the two countries.

A clear and trivial example reflecting the changes is in how '*Labour party'* is spelt in each country. New Zealand generally follows the British spelling tradition whereas in Australia the name of the party is spelt in the US way – '*Labor'*.

4.1.1. Raising Points of Order

A further difference lies in the emphasis that the Australian MPs put on the actual fact of standing up when speaking rather than on the purpose of their utterances. This happens for historic reasons because the Australian Parliament follows the British tradition of using two Despatch Boxes in the Chamber that sit on the central table in the House of Representatives next to the Prime Minister's chair and the Leader of the Opposition's chair. The Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, Ministers and Shadow Ministers use the Despatch Boxes to rest their speech notes and other documents on while addressing the House – that is when they are said to be speaking ‘from the Despatch Box’.

Despatch boxes were first used in 17th century Britain, to transport parliamentary documents to the Chamber. The Australian Parliament’s Despatch Boxes are replicas of two boxes which sat in the House of Commons in the British Parliament, before being destroyed by a bomb explosion in 1941 during the Second World War. The two Despatch Boxes symbolise the link between the British House of Commons and the Australian House of Representatives ("Despatch Boxes: Fact sheet," 2012).

Thus, to address the House a Member needs to perform a physical act of standing up from their seat and approaching one of the Despatch Boxes where

the microphones are placed. It is considered to be unparliamentary behaviour for Members to talk from their seats. The example from the Treasurer's speech below illustrates that the Despatch Boxes are an essential part of the daily routine in the Australian House of Representatives:

> **Hon. PETER COSTELLO:** *While the board of guardians are managing the Future Fund and doing it in a transparent way they are obviously discharging the law. If the Australian Labor Party says that the government should intervene, let it come to the dispatch box and say so. Let the Australian Labor Party come to the dispatch box, after saying yesterday that it would not interfere in relation to the Future Fund. Let it come to the dispatch box and say it would. If it is not prepared to do that, we can only conclude that this is petty politics which does not have any substantive policy behind it* (Australian Hansard, Question 05, 23.05.2007)[12].

The best illustration for this phenomenon would be the PLIs which are used to raise points of order in the two Houses. While New Zealand MPs use mainly one phrase *"I raise a point of order"* their Australian colleagues give preference to the following expression: *"I rise on a point of order"*. Other expressions used

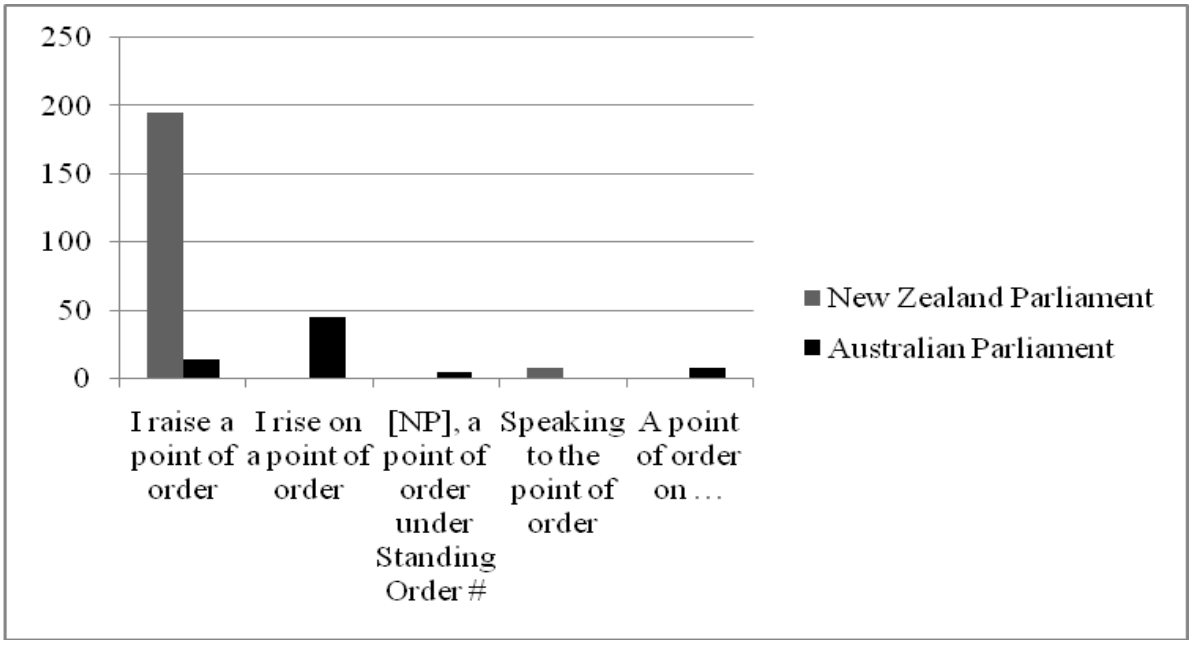
[12] It is interesting to notice that while the Australian Parliamentary Education office spells the word '*despatch*' with an '*e*' ("Despatch Boxes: Fact sheet," 2012), the parliamentary Hansard reporters use the more common equivalent spelt with an '*i*' as per example above. No instances of '*despatch*' were found in our database. The British Parliament glossary webpage also uses the word '*despatch*' ("Despatch boxes: Glossary," 2013), however, both Oxford and Cambridge Online Dictionaries contain articles on '*dispatch box*' only. Online media articles also cite '*dispatch box*'. Thus, the '*despatch box*' variant of spelling could also be viewed as an example of dialect differences.

in the two parliaments include *"[NP], a point of order under standing order #", "Speaking to the point of order", "A point of order on ..."*.

Table 13 and Graph 1 show the use of these expressions in the two parliaments. As it follows from the formulae structure, all these PLIs are fixed expressions which do not have any variable components except for occasional form of address. However, because these expressions can only be addressed to the Speakers of the two Houses, the *NP* component can either be *Madam Speaker* for the New Zealand House, or *Mr. Speaker* for the Australian Parliament.

	New Zealand Parliament (total number of utterances in 2008)	**Australian Parliament (total number of utterances in 2007)**
I raise a point of order	195	14
I rise on a point of order	0	45
NP, **a point of order under Standing Order #**	0	5
Speaking to the point of order	8	0

Table 13: The formulae structures and the total number of utterances for raising points of order in the Australian and New Zealand Parliaments.



Graph 1: The total number of utterances for raising points of order in the Australian and New Zealand Parliaments.

The first PLI "*I raise a point of order*" has the most general meaning, than "*I rise on a point of order*" which has an additional semantic component of standing up, or "*A point of order under Standing Order #*" and "*A point of order on…*" which require citing of legislature under which points of order are raised. The expression "*Speaking to the point of order*" can only be used when the point of order was raised earlier and some addition information needs to be added to it.

A more semantically neutral expression is naturally used more often and has wider geographical boundaries of use, whereas more semantically complex or specialized expressions require various non-linguistic conditions of use, or their

use is localized to particular regions due to some extra-linguistic factors, which is confirmed by our data.

4.1.2. Asking questions

Chapter 5 documented some procedural differences in the way Members ask their questions of Ministers during Question Time. Apart from these, MPs on both sides of the Tasman have different preferences in the way they ask questions. Rasiah (2007a: 38-39) believes, that due to adversarial nature of parliamentary discourse "Question Time is very seldom a straightforward question and answer scenario" because often "questions and responses carry implied meaning in them, so what is intended or implied is not what appears on surface".

In the light of the Speech Act Theory developed by Austin (1975) and Searle (1969, 1975, 1979) where utterances are seen as types of action, they may perform three types of acts: 'locutionary acts', i.e. the literary meaning of an utterance, 'illocutionary acts' – non-verbal acts performed in uttering the words, and 'perlocutionary acts' – the effect produced on a listener. As Rasiah noticed in (2007a: 39) "[i]n adversarial context such as Question Time, where rules and regulations restrict the contents and structures of both questions and responses, quite often both questioner (especially Opposition MPs) and respondents

(Ministers) resort to ‘implicatures’ or inferring some message / information without actually saying it”. In other words, “indirect illocutionary acts” are the main means of question-answer techniques in the debating Chamber.

The main prerequisite for such communication is mutually shared background knowledge of the subject discussed. Searle (1979: 31-32) explains: “[i]n indirect speech acts the speaker communicates to the hearer more than he actually says by way of relying on their mutually shared background information, both linguistic and nonlinguistic, together with the general powers of rationality and inference on the part of the hearer”. Rasiah (2007a: 43) says, that “quite often MPs and Ministers ask/give indirect, or implicit, questions and responses during Question Time. The recipients, including both parliamentarians and overhearing audience, make use of contextual and background knowledge to draw the necessary inferences”.

Questions, which are asked in the debating Chamber (especially if asked by the Opposition MPs), are often straightforward, whereas replies will usually be evasive. This is especially relevant for the Australian House of Representatives where, as was shown earlier, supplementary questions are not allowed. This means that MPs do not get a second chance to ask more questions (technically they do, though, by asking another main question on the same topic, as Diagram 2 shows). Thus, their questions tend to be long. The actual question will usually

come at the end after an MP has explained the current situation, and it will be straightforward. Harris (2001: 460) found this to be the case in the British House of Commons: “the prototypical form of a turn in Prime Minister’s Question Time is a series of propositions followed by a question frame (is he aware that, will he assure the House that) + a final information or action seeking summarizing proposition”.

The answer given, as the following example shows, appears to be evasive or irrelevant:

> **Dr. EMERSON:** *My question is to the Minister for Small Business and Tourism. I refer the minister to the recordkeeping rules imposed on small business by Work Choices, which came into force yesterday. Is the minister aware that the strict liability rules on small business provide for penalties of up to $2,750 for each breach? Does the minister support this extra liability on small business?*
>
> **FRAN BAILEY:** *I thank the member for Rankin for his question. The first thing I would say is that all workers have to be protected. I have noticed that both the Leader of the Opposition and the shadow minister have been making a number of claims about small business and Work Choices. Let me put on the record some more quotes about small business and the benefits they find from this. Let me tell you about a small businessman from the Illawarra, Mr. Jim Eddy, who says that businesses chasing tourism dollars now have more opportunities and greater freedoms. The IR laws create jobs. Diana Williams from the Fernwood women’s health club said, ‘Ninety-nine per*

cent of my staff are female and they are very happy with our AWA arrangements, as they provide flexibility and accommodate the—

Dr. EMERSON: *Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The point of order is on relevance. If the minister does not know the answer to the question, she should say so.*

The SPEAKER: *The minister is answering the question. I call the minister.*

FRAN BAILEY: *I can assure you that I do know what small business have to say. They know that we provide fairness and flexibility—*

Mr. Snowdon interjecting—

The SPEAKER: *The member for Lingiari is warned!*

FRAN BAILEY: *They know that you lot stand for bringing back unfair dismissal and ripping up AWAs. It does not matter what you say, either here or in the other place, we will get the words of small businesspeople on the record, because there is no doubt that small businesspeople around Australia unanimously support the reforms that the Howard government has brought in for small business* (Australian Hansard, Question 17, 28.03.2007).

In the New Zealand House supplementary questions are usually straightforward, whereas main questions are often very broad and of general character. As was mentioned in Chapter 5, this is due to the fact that all the main questions are first submitted in writing, and go through a checking process for relevance and compliance with Standing Order. If the content of questions is approved, then MPs who had submitted them get a chance to ask them at Question Time. Supplementaries that will follow the main question will be more specific and

straightforward. Interestingly, the more specific the question is, the more evasive the answer might be.

As Rasiah showed in (2007a), MPs widely employ different evasive strategies, i.e. they perform "tasks different from that required by the question agenda" (Rasiah, 2007a: 162), as in the following example where in response to a direct supplementary question the Minister questions the awareness of the Opposition member:

> **ANNE TOLLEY** [main question] to the Minister of Education: *Does he have confidence in the Ministry of Education; if so, why?*
>
> **Hon. CHRIS CARTER** [main answer]: *Yes, but I am sure the Ministry of Education, like all of us, can always do better.*
>
> **ANNE TOLLEY** [supplementary question]: *Why did the ministry's non-attendance prosecution trial, launched in 2004, see just four prosecutions last year and only 24 in total over the last 4 years, when it released truancy figures last year showing that under a Labour Government truancy had increased by 20 percent since the beginning of that trial, which sees 31,000 truants absent in any one week?*
>
> **Hon. CHRIS CARTER** [supplementary answer]: *Once again, the House is presented with <u>some statements by the member that, under scrutiny, does not bear up to the facts.</u> The fact is that boards of trustees choose to prosecute parents, and there have been approximately 24 cases where parents have been prosecuted on the decisions of boards of trustees. As for the truancy figures the member quotes, they have been disputed and addressed in this House on a number of occasions by me. <u>She has simply made the</u>*

figure up. In fact, we cannot possibly know how many students were truanting, because it was not until this year that we established an electronic enrolment scheme that would finally tell us, for the first time ever, how many students were missing from New Zealand schools (New Zealand Hansard, Question 08, 12.03.2008).

Is there a universal way for MPs to ask questions? As Question Time is a highly formulaic communicative event, one might think that all the questions and standard parts of replies will have a particular structure. However, the differences in the types of questions and in the Question Time procedures in both Parliaments, as well as every MPs' idiolectal variations, influence the structure of questions.

Butler (1997: 76) believes, that "the majority of the longer repeated sequences […] begin with conjunctions, articles, pronouns, prepositions or discourse markers". Wray (2002: 32), however, contests that by saying "a sequence whose fixed item is, say, a preposition, actually begins with a slot for an open class item, such as a noun or verb".

This research has identified the following types of main and supplementary questions in the debating Chambers of New Zealand and Australia:

1. Requesting information
2. Questioning the awareness of an addressee in the subject discussed

3. Questioning the work of an addressee / Cabinet, etc.
4. Question starters, transition phrases, etc.

The following subsections will take a close look at the types mentioned above in terms of their structure and dialect features. Unchanging parts of PLI are in bold type while possible variants are in cursive. The numbers in brackets ( ) indicate the instances of occurrence of these particular parts of the formula in MPs' speech. The number in brackets preceding the formula is the total number of instances in the corpus during a parliamentary year[13]. [ ] indicate components that may take various forms but must convey the specified semantic content. / indicates possible variations.

4.1.2.1. Question starters, transition phrases, etc.

Question starters are set phrasal lexical items used to inform the listeners who the question is addressed to or what topic it is going to question. It is important to mention here that although the New Zealand Hansard does register these PLIs, it does not have a word-by-word record of what was said by an MP. For

[13] I am presenting raw numbers for each formula variation rather than percentages for a number of reasons. Firstly, all the formulae are different in terms of the persons who uttered them, their belonging to a particular Parliament, party, gender, etc., and also the purpose of utterance, which makes it hard to determine a value to take for 100%. Besides, the total number of occurrences for some variations of formulae are rather small, which, if shown in percents, will make the total value insignificant. See the summaries of Chapters 6 and 7 for the full lists of formulae and graphs showing the use of those in the two Parliaments.

example, the transcript of the video recording of the following question will contain the following:

> **SUE BRADFORD:** *Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister for Social Development and asks […]* (New Zealand Parliament, video clip nz2805-06).

The Hansard record will simply have:

> ***6. SUE BRADFORD (Green)*** *to the Minister for Social Development and Employment: […]* (New Zealand Hansard, Question 6, 28.05.2008).

Thus, the database created for this research does not contain all the instances of question starters in the New Zealand Parliament. In the Australian House, on the other hand, transitional phrases are documented in the Hansard. Thus, this section will contain only examples from the Australian Chamber.

Australia:

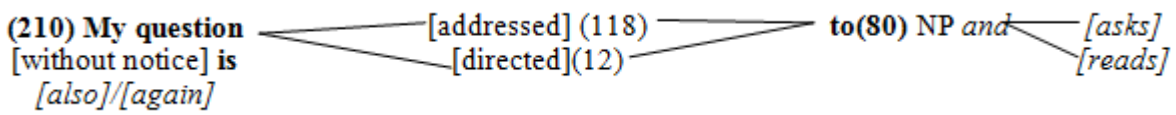


Diagram 1: The formula structure and frequencies of occurrence of *"My question is addressed to…"* in the Australian House of Representatives.

The type of a question starter presented above is used in the Australian Parliament to ask a main or an additional question (using *'also'* or *'again'*) on the topic that had already been raised in previous questions.

The other possible variant of this PLI will be the expression *"I refer to the NP's answer to…"* which was used by Australian politicians 35 times, and has many variations as it follows from its structure below:

Australia:

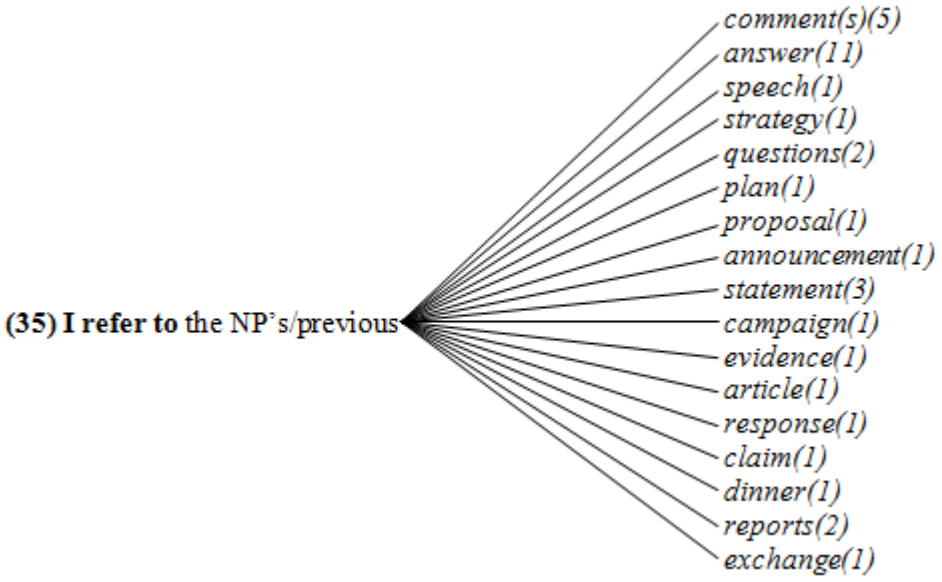


Diagram 2: The formula structure and frequencies of occurrence of *"I refer to the NP's answer to…"* in the Australian House of Representatives.

4.1.2.2. Requesting information

Originally the purpose of Question Time was to hold the Government Ministers accountable for the work of their portfolio and the Cabinet by means of asking questions. Questions requesting information have a distinct structure:

New Zealand:

(11) ***Can(8)/Would(2)/Could(1)*** *the NP* ***advise the House of (11)*** – [body of the question]

Australia:

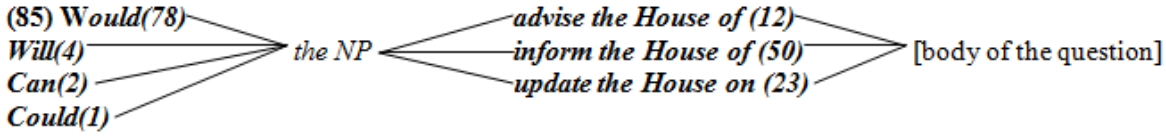


Diagram 3: The formula structure and frequencies of occurrence of *"Can the NP advise the House …"* in the New Zealand and Australian Houses of Representatives.

Rasiah (2007a: 214) believes, that often "one can instantly determine if a question is coming from a Government or an Opposition questioner (without knowing the identity of the questioner or his/her party) […]" and claims, that "[g]overnment questions were generally easy to recognize because an overwhelming majority of them began with the structure, '*Would the Minister inform/update the House […]* '". Our material supports this claim because none

of the 85 instances of this question belonged to the Opposition MPs, and only 10 were from other parties' representatives.

In her research (2007a: 188) Rasiah terms this type of questions "open questions" and claims, that they "allow Ministers to respond in almost any way by saying almost anything (however vaguely) related to the question and still have their responses considered relevant". She states that "[s]uch questions and the use of leading questions raise serious doubts about Question Time being able to fulfil any of its official functions, particularly as a forum in which the Government might be held to account for its actions" (2007b: 5).

Other frequent variations of the same question (which do not have some of the main components of the structure above or are slightly different in structure) include:

	New Zealand Parliament (total number of utterances in 2008)	**Australian Parliament (total number of utterances in 2007)**
(1)	Main questions: **(9) Can(7)/Will(2)** *the NP* **confirm that** Supplementary questions: **(125) Can(120)/Will(5)** *the NP* **confirm that**	**(22) Can(17)/Will(4)/Would(1)** *the NP* **confirm that**
(2)	Only in supplementary questions: **(24) Can(16)/Will(6)/Could(1)/Is** the NP **able(1) to tell the House**	

	(14) Can (10 asked by Bill English) **/ (4** asked by other MPs) the NP **tell us**	
(3)		**(15) Would(13)/Will(2)** the NP **outline to the House**
(4)	**(2) What is** the Minister's(1)/his(1) **response to**	**(31*) What is** the Government's(28) /Minister's(1)/his(1) **response to** ***** 28 instances of PLI used by the Opposition MPs and 3 – by National Party MPs

Table 14: Variations of information seeking questions in the New Zealand and Australian Houses of Representatives.

As can be seen from Table 14, expression (1) is typical of both Parliaments with slight variations in its structure. The fact that it is more widely used in supplementary questions in the New Zealand Parliament supports the earlier hypothesis that main questions are usually of a more general character than supplementaries.

PLI (2) is only used in supplementary questions in the New Zealand Parliament. Thus, it represents a regional genrelectal feature. The same is true of PLI (3) being the Australian genrelectal feature.

A closer look at PLI (2) shows that among the polite requests for information *(Can/Will/Could the NP tell the House…)* there is an expression which actually questions the awareness of the Minister in the matter discussed *(Is the NP able to tell the House…)*. Also, the second variation of this expression (*…tell us…)*

can be said to belong to Hon. Bill English's personal idiolect as out of 14 instances of the occurrence of this PLI 10 are provided by Hon. Bill English.

PLI (4) clearly features more in the Australian Parliament where (as it is easy to foresee) the Opposition MPs use it to question the Government. In the New Zealand House there were only 2 instances of use of this PLI, and both instances were of a more personal character (*'his/the minister's'* rather than *'the Government's'*). Thus, it is appropriate to say, that this expression also belongs to the Australian Parliamentary genrelect.

4.1.2.3. Questioning the work of an addressee / Cabinet, etc.

At question Time Opposition MPs tend to question the work of Government, Ministers and their cabinets by means of asking certain types of questions. The first example shows a main question type widely used by the New Zealand Opposition MPs. A questioner will often use this PLI as a general main question, which will later receive more specific supplementaries:

New Zealand:

Australia:

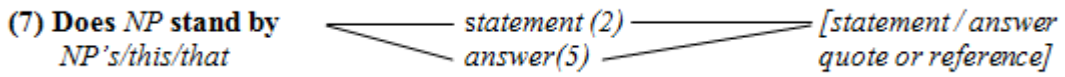


Diagram 4: The formula structure and frequencies of occurrence of *"Does NP stand by…"* in the New Zealand and Australian Houses of Representatives.

This formula may sometimes have another component – an invariable formula *"if not, why not"* attached in the end of the question, e.g.:

> **JOHN KEY:** *Does she stand by her response, when asked whether her Government got many of its ideas from the New Zealand Public Service, "No. It is a very blunt answer but it is true. We generate the ideas."; if not, why not?* (New Zealand Hansard, Question 01, 12.03.2008)

In comparison, this question type is not often used in the Australian House of Representatives because main questions there tend to be specific.

Diagrams 5 and 6 show PLIs which are characteristic of the New Zealand regional genrelect, as no instances of their occurrence were found in the Australian data. Each has a large number of variations which represent specific

aspects foe which the Opposition MPs hold the Government accountable. These PLIs occur in supplementary questions only.

New Zealand:

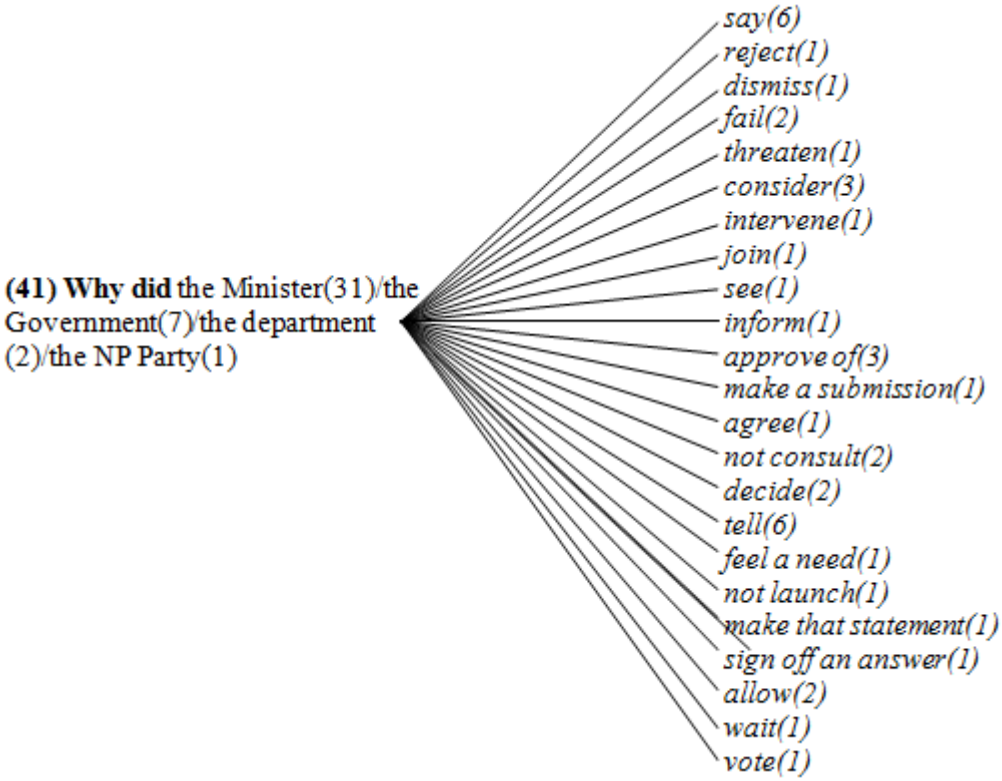


Diagram 5: The formula structure and frequencies of occurrence of *"Why did the NP…"* in the New Zealand House of Representatives.

Wh-questions are not very popular among MPs as compared to *Yes/No* questions. Wilson (1990: 146) believes, that *Wh*-questions are "normally seen as a more 'open' form; which […] means that the answer is not constrained in the way an answer to a yes/no question might be. Wh-questions presuppose an unknown variable which requires a value, where this value, unlike the limited

set of answers to a yes/no question, is selected from any one of a number of complex sets".

New Zealand:

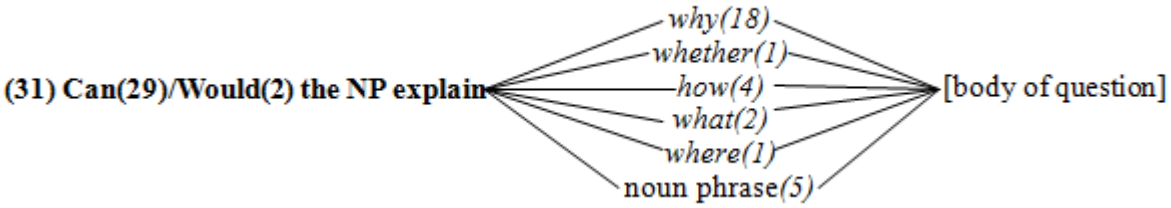


Diagram 6: The formula structure and frequencies of occurrence of *"Can the NP explain…"* in the New Zealand House of Representatives.

The following type of question is, in a way, a variation of the question presented in Diagram 6. The difference is in the semantics of the two structures. Whereas the PLI in Diagram 6 asks whether an addressee can or cannot explain why/where/how, etc. something happened, the PLI in Diagram 7 looks at the reason why it happened and an addressee's vision of it. The Second type of PLI is used in both Parliaments, but in New Zealand this PLI features in supplementary questions only. A general formula used in the two Parliaments will be presented below. Variations will be given in Table 15 that follows.

How can the NP ———— *variations* ———— [body of question]

Diagram 7: The structure of the formula *"How can the NP…"* in the New Zealand and Australian Houses of Representatives.

New Zealand Parliament (total number of utterances in 2008)	Australian Parliament (total number of utterances in 2007)
Diagram 7 **(15) How can** the NP (Minister/Department/Government) *claim(4)/say(2)/justify(1)/guarantee(1)/overcome(1)/let a situation arise(1)/expect(2)/maintain(1)/go ahead(1)/believe(1)* **7a** **(7) How can** the NP (the public(4)/the Minister(1)/the system(1)/the House(1) *have confidence in(4)/believe(2)/be working well(1)*	**Diagram 7** **(6) How can** the NP (Government/Prime Minister/Treasurer) *claim(4)/tell(1)/continue(1)*

Table 15: Variations of the formula *"How can the NP…"* and frequencies of their occurrence in the New Zealand and Australian Parliaments.

Formula 7a shifts the focus from the addressee to a more general subject. Although both formulae are used to criticise the Government, formula 7 questions the quality of work that had been done by a Parliamentary representative / department, whereas formula 7a analyses the impact of what had been done onto a more general subject (e.g. public). Compare the two New Zealand Hansard records which contain formulae 7 and 7a:

(7) Dr. the Hon. LOCKWOOD SMITH: *How can the Minister claim that he was unaware of the extent of the problem prior to that December briefing, and therefore could not brief the Prime Minister and Cabinet on the issues, when he and his predecessor, David Cunliffe, together signed off over 40 written parliamentary questions last year that clearly listed the number of substantiated cases of misconduct, fraud, bribery, theft, corruption, and other serious offences within the Immigration Service?* (New Zealand Hansard, Question 05, 21.05.2008)

(7a) ERIC ROY: *How can the public possibly have any confidence in the Minister and the Department of Conservation, when in one week its officers shot a takahē, mistaking it for a pūkeko, and in the next week we learnt that seven kea were killed in a botched poisoning operation?* (New Zealand Hansard, Question 03, 30.07.2008)

Diagram 8 represents a New Zealand genrelectal formula which, unlike all the PLIs described above, represents a completed syntactical unit with only two variables:

(15) Does the NP1 **have confidence in** the NP2, **if so, why / if not, why not?**

Diagram 8: The formula structure and frequencies of occurrence of *"Does the NP1 have confidence in the NP2, if so, why / if not, why not?"* in the New Zealand House of Representatives.

Yet again, unlike other examples from the New Zealand Parliament, this formula is only used in main questions. It is a very general introductory

question that does not breach the Standing Orders, and allows a questioner to introduce an element of surprise in the supplementary questions that will follow, because it will be difficult for a Minister to guess what topic is going to be covered in course of supplementaries unless there is an urgent ongoing issue.

It is important to say, that along with being dialectal, this formula is also idiolectal, as is the reply to it. Six out of 15 times this question was asked of Rt. Hon. Helen Clark by the Leader of the Opposition John Key. Her reply would always be the same:

> **JOHN KEY: Does she have confidence in the Minister** *of/for NP;* **if so, why?**
>
> **Rt. Hon. HELEN CLARK: Yes; because** *he/she* **is a hard-working and conscientious Minister.**

One day this reply was given by Hon. Dr. Michael Cullen who was performing the duties of the Acting Prime Minister in the absence of Rt. Hon. Helen Clark:

> **Hon BILL ENGLISH (Deputy Leader—National) to the Prime Minister:** *Does she have confidence in the Minister of Immigration; if so, why?*
>
> **Hon Dr MICHAEL CULLEN (Acting Prime Minister):** *Yes, because he is a hard-working and conscientious Minister* (New Zealand Hansard, Question 02, 14.05.2008)

People who spend considerable time listening to parliamentary proceedings could not help noticing that it was given mockingly to humour the House,

because formulaic language is closely tied to indexicality, as by using a particular linguistic formula one can index the identities of other people who use that formula (Bell, 1984, 1999).

4.1.2.4. Questioning the awareness of an addressee in the subject discussed

Ministers need to be aware and stay constantly updated by their staff on the issues of concern of their departments. This is not only part of their job but also an essential pre-requisite for Question Time. It is considered to be a failure for a Minister not to be able to answer a question. Thus, Opposition MPs often approach this issue from different angles in hope of catching Ministers off guard.

For the first PLI in this category a general formula will be presented below. Variations will be given in Table 26 that follows.

Is the NP **aware of** ———— *variations*

Diagram 9: The structure of the formula *"Is the NP aware of …"* in the New Zealand and Australian Houses of Representatives.

New Zealand Parliament (total number of utterances in 2008)	Australian Parliament (total number of utterances in 2007)
(15) Is the NP **aware of** *research(1)/document(1)/concerns(1)/claims(1)complaints(1)/misconduct(1)/evidence(1)/fiasco(1)/irregularities(2)/incident(1)/reports(1)/comments(1)/statement(1)/estimate(1)*	**(48) Is** the NP **aware of** *alternative policies(13),alternative approaches(6)/claims(10)/threats(5)/figures(2)/views(2)/proposals(2)/comments(2)/plans(2)/report(1)/effort(1)/campaign(1)/examples(1)/submission(1)/instances of(1)/opposition(1)/infrastructure bottlenecks(1)/argument(1)/acts of bullying(1)/risks(1)*

Table 16: Variations of the formula *"Is the NP aware of…"* and frequencies of their occurrence in the New Zealand and Australian Parliaments.

As follows from the data, the PLI described in Diagram 9 and Table 16 comes up three times less frequently in the New Zealand House than in the Australian one. In the New Zealand House it appears to be exclusively in supplementary questions as a result of their more specific character.

In the Australian Parliament this expression is widely used almost exclusively by the Government MPs asking questions of Ministers (44 instances out of total of 48). This formula might be one of those types of question that Government MPs pre-prepare and ask of the Ministers to show the work of their departments in a favourable light. It is also quite interesting to observe how the questions of this type asked by the Government MPs have almost identical structure, and the whole body of a question in actual fact consists of several formulae going one after another in a particular order, rather than including only the described

above PLI. This might also be the sign of the questions been pre-prepared. Compare the following examples of such questions (formulae are underlined):

> **KAY ELSON:** *My question is addressed to the Minister for Health and Ageing. Would the minister advise the House of the Commonwealth's support for dentistry and in particular the 90 per cent of services provided by the private sector? Is the minister aware of any alternative policies, and what is the government's response*? (Australian Hansard, Question 12, 14.02.2007)

> **DANNA VALE:** *My question is addressed to the Minister for the Environment and Water Resources. Would the minister outline to the House examples of environmentally sustainable forms of power generation capable of providing baseload power needs to 2050 and beyond? Is the minister aware of any alternative views? What is the government's response*? (Australian Hansard, Question 16, 28.02.2007)

> **ANDREW SOUTHCOTT:** *My question is addressed to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Would the minister update the House on the security situation in Iraq? Is the minister aware of any other approaches and what is the government's response?* (Australian Hansard, Question 14, 15.08.2007)

Another fact in support of the above offered hypothesis that this type of questions is a template for pre-prepared questions from Government MPs is the low participation of the above named MPs in Question Time. In 2007 Andrew

Southcott asked only 6 main questions (as the statistics on MPs table of the database shows). Danna Vale asked 4 questions and Kay Elson – just one!

In comparison, the Opposition MPs' questions containing this formula have a different structure, but because of the insignificant number of examples it is hardly possible to speak about a trend:

> **JENNY MACKLIN:** *My question is to the Prime Minister. Is the Prime Minister aware of the 2003 work and family prime ministerial cabinet submission, which included a recommendation that the Treasurer, the then Minister for Children and Youth Affairs and the then minister for education report to cabinet in mid-2004 with models for the future direction of the childcare and early childhood education sectors? Is the Prime Minister aware that the submission raised concerns about the quality of services for preschool age children? If so, when will the Prime Minister provide the funding necessary to make sure that all Australian four-year-olds have access to 15 hours of early learning a week?* (Australian Hansard, Question 07, 28.02.2007)

The following formula is similar to the one described above in terms of asking a Minister to recall a particular event in order to criticize the Minister or his / her department for the actions taken. One instance out of 13 New Zealand utterances was found in the main question. All the rest were found in supplementaries. A general formula is further followed by the list of variables and their frequencies of occurrence:

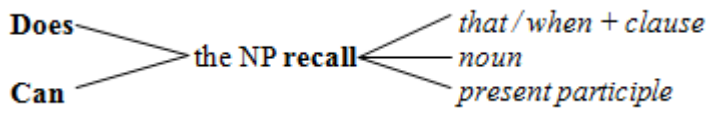


Diagram 10: The structure of the formula *"Does the NP recall…"* in the New Zealand and Australian Houses of Representatives.

New Zealand Parliament (total number of utterances in 2008)	Australian Parliament (total number of utterances in 2007)
(13) Does(7)/Can(5) the NP **recall** *that(4)/effect(2)advising(1)/telling(1)/statement(1)/seeing(1)/making this statement(1)/stating(1)/justifying(1)*	**(7) Does** the NP **recall** *when(1)/NP2's saying(1)/being asked(3)/making(1)/fact(1)*

Table 17: Variations of the formula *"Does the NP recall…"* and frequencies of their occurrence in the New Zealand and Australian Parliaments.

The formula shown on Diagram 11 is specific to New Zealand parliamentary discourse only. Out of total of 47 occurrences 11 were found in main questions and 36 in supplementaries. This formula, as well as the PLI *"Is the NP aware of…"* in the Australian Parliament, might be used by Government MPs to ask pre-prepared questions of their Ministers. This hypothesis is supported by the statistical data showing that 31of those questions were asked by the Government MPs and none by the Opposition. The other 16 questions were asked by New Zealand Green, New Zealand Progressive and New Zealand Maori parties' representatives.

New Zealand:

Diagram 11: The formula structure and frequencies of occurrence of *"Has the NP received any reports…"* in the New Zealand House of Representatives.

This hypothesis is confirmed by the existence of a similar expression *"What reports, if any, has the NP received on…"* which has a high frequency of occurrence (44 instances: 24 in main questions, 20 in supplementaries), and was almost exclusively used by the Government party MPs (42 instances with the remaining 2 belonging to New Zealand First).

(44) What reports, [if any(2)], has the NP **received on** [body of the question]

Diagram 11a: The formula structure and frequencies of occurrence of *"What reports, if any, has the NP received on…"* in the New Zealand House of Representatives.

4.1.3. Answering questions

4.1.3.1. Answer starters, etc.

This category is quite large and contains formulae used in the first line of Ministers' answers. Most of these formulae do not allow any variation except for different forms of address.

Australia:

(125) I thank the [honourable] member [*for* *electorate*] for his/her question

Diagram 12: The formula structure and frequencies of occurrence of *"I thank the honourable member for his/her question"* in the Australian House of Representatives.

As was mentioned in Chapter 5, this formula is used by Australian Ministers to start answering a question asked by a Government MP. In this case the Minister usually thanks the MP first before giving an answer to the question. Quite often another formula may follow straight after this expression to acknowledge an MP's interest in the matter discussed, his/her achievements in this area, etc.:

> **Hon. JOHN HOWARD;** *I thank the member for Wakefield for that question. The member for Wakefield has been an articulate proponent of the interests of families in*

his electorate since he came to this place some 2½ years ago (Australian Hansard, Question 02, 23.05.2007).

Hon. MAL BROUGH: *I thank the member for Solomon for his question and his genuine interest in Australia's Indigenous population* (Australian Hansard, Question 08, 23.05.2007).

Hon. WARREN TRUSS: *I thank the honourable member for Barker for his question. Representing an export electorate, he would be deeply conscious of the importance of good trade to our national economy* (Australian Hansard, Question 12, 23.05.2007).

Hon. TONY ABBOTT: *I thank the member for Pearce for her question, and I acknowledge her work as the co-chair of the Parliamentary Diabetes Support Group* (Australian Hansard, Question 14, 23.05.2007).

Opposition MPs are normally not thanked by Ministers unless their question is likely to show the work of the Minister or his/her department in a favourable light, or when there is a chance for the Minister to make some derogatory comments about the Opposition and/or their policies, or their lack of knowledge in the question discussed (the bold font is used to highlight the criticism of the Opposition; the bold underlined font shows the praise of the Government):

Hon. JULIE BISHOP: *I thank the member for Perth for his question.* ***He obviously does not understand that*** *the endowment fund is on top of what the Australian*

government already provides universities for capital works and research facilities. ***Last year alone the Australian government provided over*** *$240 million for capital and $460 million for research facilities. What the Treasurer announced last night is an endowment fund that will be invested, with the income from that endowment fund being distributed to universities on top of what we already fund.* ***This is an unprecedented level of investment in Australian universities****.* ***The Australian Labor Party could only dream of such an initiative*** (Australian Hansard, Question 19, 09.05.2007).

The following PLI is used in both Parliaments. In the New Zealand Parliament it only occurs in supplementary questions. In the Australian debating Chamber it is mostly the Prime Minister John Howard who uses it (14 instances out of 15) in his answers to questions by the Leader of the Opposition. This makes the answer more person-oriented as by saying "*I remind the Leader of the Opposition…"* the Prime Ministers thus excludes all the other MPs. The general formula for the two Houses is followed by the list of variables and their frequencies of occurrence:

I remind the NP **of/that/about** [body of the answer]

Diagram 13: The structure of the formula *"I remind…"* in the New Zealand and Australian Houses of Representatives.

New Zealand Parliament (total number of utterances in 2008)	Australian Parliament (total number of utterances in 2007)
(13) I remind *the House(6)/the member (6)/her(1)* **of/that/about**	**(15) I remind** *the Leader of the Opposition(8)/the House(2)/members opposite(1)/the member for(2)/the people of(1)/him(2)* **of/that/about**

Table 18: Variations of the formula *"I remind…"* and frequencies of their occurrence in the New Zealand and Australian Parliaments.

The formula described above performs several functions: it either refers a questioner to a previously given answer/information (1), or it is used as a tool to remind Members of some events with undesirable consequences (2). It may even be used to insult an MP(3), as the example shows:

> **(1) Hon. Dr. MICHAEL CULLEN:** *I remind the member that this Government legislated to remove tariffs on the least developed countries in the world, and that member and his party opposed the removal of those tariffs* (New Zealand Hansard, Question 03, 19.03.2008).

> **(2) Hon. ANNETTE KING:** *I have seen many positive and supportive comments, particularly from organisations like Victim Support. But I am disappointed to say that improving services and support for victims does not appear to be anywhere near to the top of the National Party's priorities.* <u>*I remind the House that*</u> ***three National members on the select committee refused to fully participate in that inquiry and preferred to grandstand about the committee's trip to Australia. Politics was obviously more important to them than victims were*** (New Zealand Hansard, Question 05, 19.03.2008).

(3) Hon. CHRIS CARTER: <u>*I remind the House again about*</u> ***that member's poor grasp of both literacy and numeracy***. *She has already told the House that the staff has increased. She used the word "ballooning" by 112 positions. Actually, my maths tells me that that is by 7.4 percent, so I am sorry, I tell* ***"Mrs. Tulley", but the numbers do not add up, again*** (New Zealand Hansard, Question 08, 27.08.2008).

The following PLI is often used by Australian Ministers and occasionally by New Zealand Ministers to either attract Member(s)' attention to what they are saying, to emphasise some points in their speech, for singling out particular Members in the House by means of addressing them personally. Although the latter is not allowed, the Speakers in both Houses never penalised any Member for using this technique. The formula on Diagram 14 is followed by the statistical data on variations of this expression in the two debating Chambers:

Diagram 14: The structure of the formula *"I say to / tell the NP…"* in the New Zealand and Australian Houses of Representatives.

New Zealand Parliament (total number of utterances in 2008)	Australian Parliament (total number of utterances in 2007)
(39) I say to(26)/I tell(13) *the member(19)/the House(6)/him/her(5)/Mr./Mrs. NP(5)/NP(first name address)(2)/to Kiwis(1)/to those thousands(1)*	**(35) I say to(34)/I tell(1)** *the member for(4)/the House(1)/members opposite(2)/little conclave opposite(1)/him(2)/you(1)/to Kiwis(1)/to those thousands(1)/Leader of the Opposition(19)/the people of Australia(1)/the Australians(1)/the Labor Party(1)*

Table 19: Variations of the formula *"I say to / tell the NP…"* and frequencies of their occurrence in the New Zealand and Australian Parliaments.

The next formula belongs solely to the Australian Parliament and is used by Minister to refer their listeners (often a particular person who asked the question) to a piece of legislation or to the previous answers, statements, etc. All PLIs of this kind are what Fenton-Smith calls "a preface – a statement or statements that relate to the question(s) to come" (2008: 103-105). In his research on questions at Australian Question Time he shows that prefaces perform several functions:

- contextualize and provide relevance for the question to follow;
- constrain the range of possible answers, to pressure the recipient to answer in a certain way;
- confine the recipient's range of possibilities in answering the question;
- provide a vehicle through which the Opposition can circumvent institutional constrains on questioning.

The general formula for those ends looks as follows:

Australia:

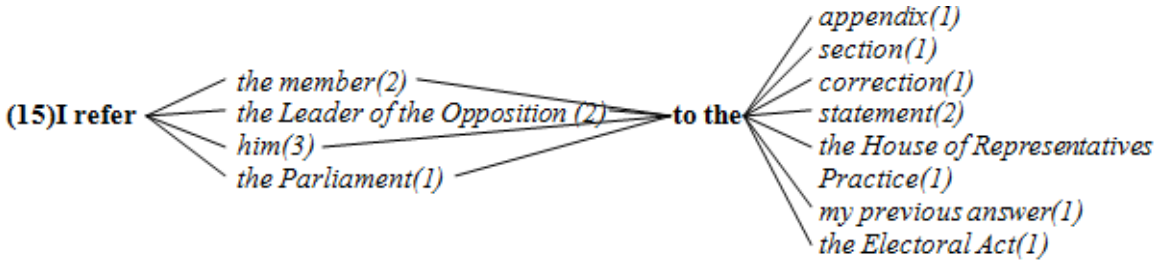


Diagram 15: The structure of the formula *"I refer the NP1 to the NP2"* in the New Zealand and Australian Houses of Representatives.

4.1.3.2. Providing information

The following formulae are used by Ministers when providing information to questioners.

The general formula on Diagram 16 and the statistical data on the PLI's frequencies of occurrence in the Ministers' replies on Table 30 show that Ministers rely a great deal on the information from their departments when answering questions. This is especially the case in the New Zealand Parliament (as the statistics below shows) because both the questions and the answers are prepared and Ministers get a chance to consult with their departments before answering questions.

Diagram 16: The structure of the formula *"I am advised that/ by the NP that…"* in the New Zealand and Australian Houses of Representatives.

New Zealand Parliament (total number of utterances in 2008)	Australian Parliament (total number of utterances in 2007)
(41) I am advised *that(33)*+*clause/[by(8)* *the DHB(1)/the NZ Defence Force(2)/the Police(1)/the Cabinet(1)/by the board(1)/by the previous Minister(1)/by Dr. Cullen(1)* ***that]***	**(6) I am advised *that*+*clause(5)/by*** *my office(1)*

Table 20: Variations of the formula *"I am advised that/ by the NP that…"* and frequencies of their occurrence in the New Zealand and Australian Parliaments.

The formula *"What I can confirm is that…"* is an expression which does not have any variable components. It is an introductory phrase which is used to emphasise that the Minister cannot confirm the information presented in the question but has a contradictory fact that he / she can confirm. This formula was used in 9 New Zealand supplementary answers and in only one main question in the Australian Parliament.

What I can confirm is that + [body of the answer]

Diagram 17: The structure of the formula *"What I can confirm is that…"* in the New Zealand and Australian Houses of Representatives.

A similar but more straightforward expression is *"I cannot confirm…"* which, according to the data below, is also a predominantly New Zealand feature:

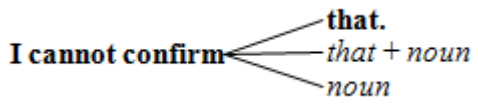


Diagram 18: The structure of the formula *"I cannot confirm…"* in the New Zealand and Australian Houses of Representatives.

New Zealand Parliament (total number of utterances in 2008)	Australian Parliament (total number of utterances in 2007)
(11) I cannot confirm that(7)/*that information(2)/any of these figures(1)/the details(2)*	**(3) I cannot confirm** *that(1)/any of these matters(2)*

Table 21: Variations of the formula *"I cannot confirm…"* and frequencies of their occurrence in the New Zealand and Australian Parliaments.

The following expression is used by Ministers in both Parliaments to present and/or prove the opposite point of view. As per the data below, this PLI often occurs in supplementary answers in the New Zealand Parliament (12 out of 14 instances).

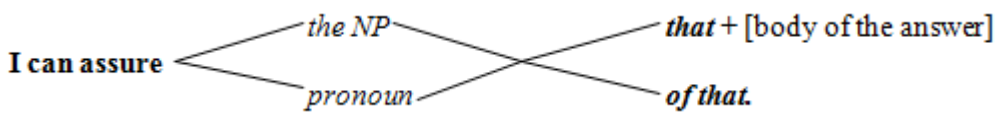


Diagram 19: The structure of the formula *"I can assure the NP that…"* in the New Zealand and Australian Houses of Representatives.

New Zealand Parliament (total number of utterances in 2008)	Australian Parliament (total number of utterances in 2007)
(14) I can assure *the Member(12)/him(2)* ***that*** **+** [body of the answer](13)/***of that(1).***	**(6) I can assure** *her/him(3)/the Leader of the Opposition(1)/the House(1)/you, Mr. Speaker(1)* **that +** [body of the answer]

Table 22: Variations of the formula *"I can assure the NP that…"* and frequencies of their occurrence in the New Zealand and Australian Parliaments.

The following PLI *"Let me say…"* is also an expression that is exclusively used in the Australian Parliament by Ministers to either draw the attention of the listeners to particular points in their answers (*"Let me say that…", "Let me say it again", "Let me say in conclusion…", etc*.), or to single out a certain MP in their answer to the question either because the matter discussed is of their interest, or to ridicule the MP, like in the example that follows Diagram 20.

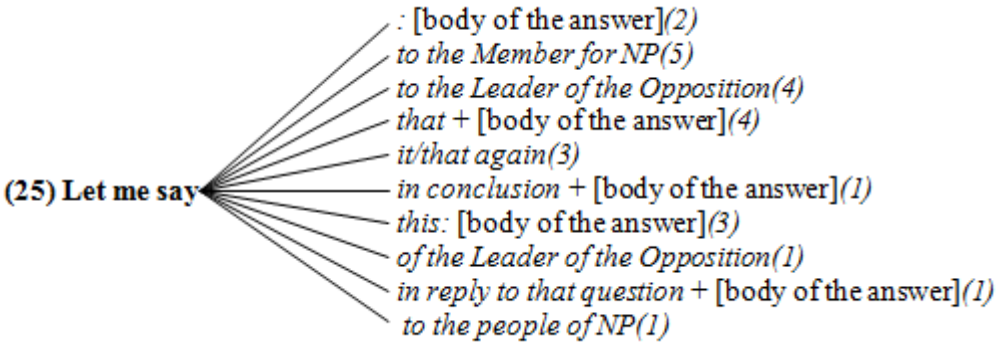


Diagram 20: The formula structure and frequencies of occurrence of *"Let me say…"* in the Australian House of Representatives.

> **Hon. TONY ABBOTT: […]** *Let me say of the Leader of the Opposition, if he is untrustworthy with the truth, you certainly cannot trust him with Medicare* (Australian Hansard, Question 14, 30.05.2007).

It is interesting to notice that this PLI is used by only 3 Ministers of the Australian Parliament who are the most active participants of Question Time – Hon. Prime Minister John Howard (17 instances), Hon. Tony Abbott (7 times) and Hon. Peter Costello (1 instance). Besides, as they say, "imitation is the sincerest form of flattering". In other words, from the fact that Hon. Tony Abbott extensively uses the Prime Minister's expression one might infer that he fully supports the work and ideas of his leader, and also that he might hope to become a Prime Minister himself one day.

4.1.4. Raising points of order on other matters

If an MP wishes to raise a point of order they use one of the formulae discussed in section 3.1.1. of this work. Other matters raised in course of Question Time, such as, for example, *seeking indulgence of the Chair to make a personal explanation*, or *to seek leave to table a document* are also treated as Points of Order in the database. Most of these PLIs have a dialectal character peculiar to one of the Parliaments only because in fact they are house-keeping matters. The following types of those formulae were identified:

- Points of order to make a personal explanation
- Points of order to seek leave to table a document
- Points of order to request / provide comment withdrawal (and apology)
- Points of order on relevance
- Points of order seeking the indulgence of the Chair to add to an answer

4.1.4.1. Points of order to make a personal explanation

A series of set formulae underlie a process of offering a personal explanation in the Australian debating Chamber (as it was shown in Chapter 5). The following example describes the usual procedure for this type of the Speaker-MP interaction in the Australian House with total of 5 personal explanations made in 2007:

> **KELVIN THOMSON: Mr. Speaker, I seek leave to make a personal explanation.**
>
> **Mr. SPEAKER: Does the honourable member claim to have been misrepresented?**
>
> **KELVIN THOMSON:** *Yes, Mr. Speaker, in two newspaper articles.*
>
> **Mr. SPEAKER: Please proceed.**
>
> [The explanation follows] (Australian Hansard, Personal Explanation 01, 12.09.2007).

In the New Zealand House there is no strict protocol to follow when making a personal explanation. In fact, only one personal explanation was made in 2008 and it was offered in the following way: *"I wish to make a personal*

explanation. [Body of the explanation]" (New Zealand Hansard, Question 03, 19.03.2008).

4.1.4.2. Points of order to seek leave to table a document

The following set of formulae is characteristic of the New Zealand Parliament. It is used when MPs want to table a particular document in order to support their speech with some facts or documents. In this case they have to say *"I seek leave to table the document"*. After the leave has been sought the Speaker asks the House if there are any objections. The procedure and its outcomes can be best illustrated by Diagram 21 below.

New Zealand:

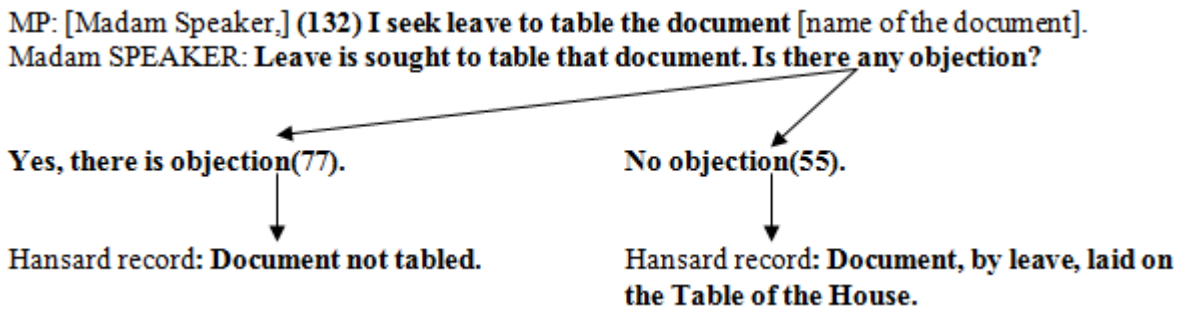


Diagram 21: The formula structure and frequencies of occurrence of *"I seek leave to table the document…"* in the New Zealand House of Representatives.

This formula occurs in the end of a question set when all the supplementary questions have been asked and answered. After that, before moving to the next question, the Speaker always asks: *"Any supplementaries? Points of order?"* The largest number of leaves sought to table a document (9) was in Question 05, 20.02.2008.

4.1.4.3. Points of order to request / provide comment withdrawal (and apology)

There are two ways to request a comment withdrawal (and apology):

1. When Members take offense or consider a comment to be unparliamentary, they raise a point of order to request a comment withdrawal (and apology).
2. When the Speaker considers a comment to be unparliamentary or offensive he/she may ask the offender to withdraw it (and apologise).

Let us take a closer look at the formulae that are used in the two Parliaments under these situations.

In the New Zealand Parliament the standard formula for requesting a comment withdrawal and apology would be as per Diagram 22:

New Zealand:

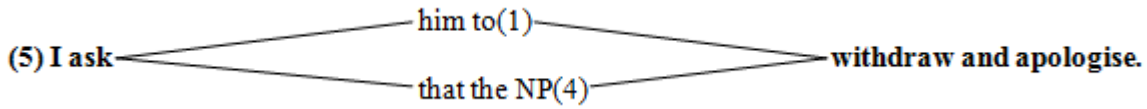


Diagram 22: The formula structure and frequencies of occurrence of *"I ask that the NP withdraw and apologise"* in the New Zealand House of Representatives.

Gerry Brownlee can be said to have his own idiolect because every time he speaks in the House he avoids using standard parliamentary formulae. Out of nine utterances calling for withdrawal and apology three were from Gerry Brownlee:

(2) The NP **should be** *required/asked* **to withdraw that remark**.

(1)That Member should withdraw and apologise.

Another interesting example comes from Paul Swain. When the discussion completely got out of order because several members took offense and other members were requested to apologise. As a result the Speaker, who at some point lost the trail of the discussion, made the wrong people withdraw and apologise. As a result, Paul Swain came up with the following suggestion: *"I think the Minister should withdraw his withdrawal and apology*" (New Zealand Hansard, Question 10, 16.04.2008).

In the Australian Parliament MPs are not required to apologise. The standard formula looks as follows:

Australia:

(2) I ask that it be withdrawn.

Diagram 23: The formula structure and frequencies of occurrence of *"I ask that it be withdrawn"* in the Australian House of Representatives.

The possible variations are "(1)*I think that reference should be withdrawn and apologised for"* and "(1)*She should also withdraw it"*.

The Speakers' formulae to initiate the withdrawal of a remark (and apology) are quite different. Hon. Margaret Wilson says it in the form of a polite request whereas Hon. David Hawker orders MPs to do this. Table 23 shows formulae structures and possible variations of these expressions:

New Zealand Parliament (total number of utterances in 2008)	**Australian Parliament (total number of utterances in 2007)**
(11) Would the Minister(6)/the Member(5) **please withdraw and apologise.**	**(7)** The NP **will withdraw that** [unparliamentary(1)/offensive(2)] *statement(4)/comment(2)/remark(1)*
(3) I think the NP **should withdraw** *that allegation(1)/last comment(2)*	**(2)** The NP **will withdraw.**
(2) Withdraw and apologise.	**(1)** The NP **is well aware that that expression is unparliamentary and he will withdraw it.**

(2) The NP **has asked for you to** [please] **withdraw and apologise.**	**(1)** The NP **will withdraw without a reservation.**
(1) Would the NP **please withdraw the comment.**	**(1)** The NP **has made an offensive remark and he will withdraw it.**
(3) I think the NP **should withdraw** *that allegation(1)/last comment(2)*	
(1) I will ask the NP **to withdraw and apologise.**	

Table 23: Variations of the formula *"…withdraw (and apologise)…"* and frequencies of their occurrence in the New Zealand and Australian Parliaments.

When withdrawing comments the MPs in both Parliaments always use standard formulae:

New Zealand Parliament (total number of utterances in 2008)	Australian Parliament (total number of utterances in 2007)
(15) I withdraw and apologise.	**(7) I withdraw.**
(3) I withdraw that comment.	

Table 24: Variations of the formula *"I withdraw (and apologise)"* and frequencies of their occurrence in the New Zealand and Australian Parliaments.

4.1.4.4. Points of order on relevance

One of the most common points of order that Members of the New Zealand and the Australian Parliament raise during Question Time are points of order on relevance. Once again, there are differences in the way the MPs word their

points of order. These differences can partially be explained by the Speakers' requirements. For example, in the Australian House the Speaker requires the MPs to cite Standing Orders when raising a point of order. In case they fail to do so the point of order is treated by the Speaker as being "not a point of order", whereas New Zealand MPs are free to choose the format of their points of orders. They are even allowed to present their opinion regarding why they think that the question or answer is irrelevant.

In the New Zealand Parliament the standard procedure is as follows:

1. An MP raises a point of order to let the Speaker know that in their opinion the Minister's answer did not address the question. The following formulae will be used for these:

   (2) The NP **did not address the question.**

   (2) Did the NP **address the question?**

   (1) The answer did not address the question.

   (1) The NP **is making no attempt to address the question.**

   In some cases the Speaker will point out to the Minister that the question was not addressed:

   (3) That(1)/The NP(2) **did not address the question.**

   (1) I do not think the NP **addressed the question.**

2. As a respond to the point of order the Speaker will:

(a) agree that the question was not addressed and invite the Minister to

- answer it:

(10) Would the NP *please(7)/just(2)/like to(1)* **address the question?**

(3) Just address the question.

(3) I ask the NP **to address the question.**

(1) The NP **must address the question.**

- add to their answer:

(4) Does the NP wish(3)/Would the NP like **to add to his answer?**

(2) Perhaps(1)/May be(1) the NP **would like to add to his answer?**

(1) If he wishes to add to his answer, I invite him to do so.

(b) state that the matter is outside their ministerial responsibilities:

(4) The Minister(2)/Minister[s](1) **has no responsibility for(2) …** / is/are **not responsible for(2)…**

(1) There is no ministerial responsibility for…

(1) It is not within ministerial responsibility…

(1) I am not sure the Minister actually has any responsibility for…

(2) Would the NP bring(1)/cast(1) **the question within ministerial responsibility?**

(c) state that the Minister did address the question:

(15) [I think(3)] the NP **did** [in fact(1)/actually(3)] **address the question.**

(1) The NP **addressed the question.**

(3) That(1)/It(1)/The answer(1) **did address the question.**

In the Australian Parliament, as was mentioned previously, the MPs are required to cite the Standing Order number when raising points of order. The formulae exchange between an MP and the Speaker would be as follows:

1. A Member raises a point of order on relevance:

   (11) Mr. Speaker, I raise(7)/I rise on(4) **a point of order** on relevance(8q)/under Standing Order 104(3).

   (3) I rise on a point of order, which goes(2)/going(1) **to relevance.**

   (1) Mr. Speaker, a point of order on relevance.

   (1) Mr. Speaker, I raise a point of order on ministers answering questions in their area of responsibility.

2. If a point of order was raised by a Government MP, the Speaker would most likely respond:

   (2) The NP **raises a valid point of order.**

However, if it was raised by an Opposition MP, the Speaker would either say:

(7) That is not a point of order.

(3) The NP **is not responsible for…**

or:

(21) [(15)I *am/have been/was listening/listened* **carefully** to the NP **and] he is entirely in order.**

(3) The NP **is in order, and** the NP **will be heard.**

4.1.4.5. Points of order seeking the indulgence of the Chair to add to an answer

At the end of each Question Time period Members of the Australian House of Representatives have an opportunity to add to their answer. In this case they need to seek the indulgence of the Chair to do so. Only 3 such cases were registered in the Australian Hansard in 2007. The procedure is always as follows:

MP: **Mr. Speaker, I seek the indulgence of the chair to add to an answer.**

Mr. SPEAKER: The NP **may proceed.**

MP: [additional information]

4.1.5. Miscellaneous

4.1.5.1. Turn-taking PLIs and transitional phrases

This section provides the formulae for transitional and turn-taking PLIs used mostly in the Australian Parliament because the Hansard records there register most of such type of expressions whereas in the New Zealand Parliament (as

has been mentioned before) most of the transitional phrases are omitted from the Hansard script. Besides, the Australian Speaker's speech is more formalised as he tends to use formulae in all his utterances, whereas the New Zealand Speaker, alongside the use of formulae, likes to dwell on a subject to explain her point of view or to justify her rulings.

The following PLI has two variants which differ slightly in their meanings. The first one on Diagram 24 simply invites an addressee to speak, whereas the second one (Diagram 24a) points out to other participants that it is the particular Member's turn to speak at the moment:

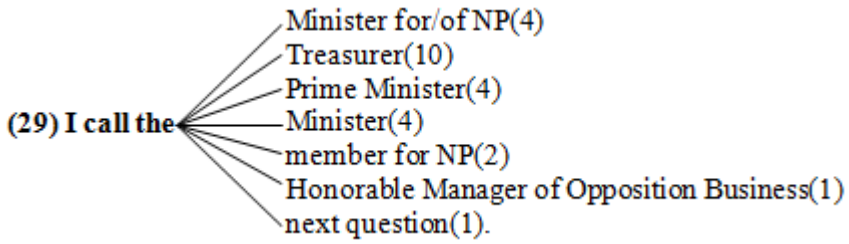


Diagram 24: The formula structure and frequencies of occurrence of *"I call the NP"* in the Australian House of Representatives.

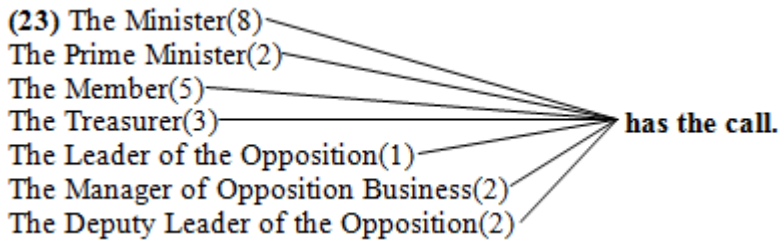


Diagram 24a: The formula structure and frequencies of occurrence of *"The NP has the call"* in the Australian House of Representatives.

As the video clips of Question Time show, the following expression was uttered by the New Zealand Speaker at the end of each question set on every sitting day, i.e. at least 12 times a day. However, only 3 instances of its occurrence were registered in the Hansard:

(3) [Are there(2)] **any further supplementary questions?**

Diagram 25: The formula structure and frequencies of occurrence of *"Are there any further supplementary questions?"* in the New Zealand House of Representatives

4.1.5.2. Forms of reference

When speaking in the House, MPs in both Parliaments try to make their points more plausible by highlighting certain aspects of the work of the Government. Thus, a Minister answering a question will underline positive aspects of its work and achievements whereas an Opposition MP will try to do the opposite in their questions.

The expression *"this Government"* was extensively used in the two Parliaments for these purposes. It occurred 102 times in the New Zealand Parliament and 63 in the Australian House.

Utterance Text "this Government"

	Men		Women		Utterance Type																
	Minister	Non-Minister	Minister	Non-Minister	Main Question	Main Question (cont)	Main Answer	Main answer (cont)	Supplementary Question	Supplementary Question (cont)	Supplementary Answer	Supplementary Answer (cont)	Interruption	Point of Order	Point of Order (cont)	Indulgence	Personal explanation	Speaker's Ruling	Apology	Comment withdrawal	Comment
NZ Labour (Govt)	38		27	2			9		3		51	4									
NZ National (Opp)		14		3					16	1											
NZ First																					
NZ United Future				1					1												
NZ Green Party																					
NZ Maori Party																					
NZ Progressive	15						3		1		11										
NZ ACT New Zealand		2							1					1							
Independent																					
AUS Liberal (Govt)	55	1	3				45	13			1										
AUS Labor (Opp)		1													1						
AUS National	3						3														
AUS Country Liberal																					

Table 25: Statistical data on the use of the PLI *"this Government"* in the Australian and New Zealand Parliaments.

The statistics on Table 25 shows that Government MPs preferred this PLI more than the Opposition MPs because it allowed them to underline what the Government of the day had achieved whereas a few examples from the New Zealand Opposition MPs show how the same expression can be used for criticism:

Positive aspects of the Government's work:

> **Hon. CHRIS CARTER:** *What I do know is that <u>this Government</u> has invested $4.5 million in district truancy services, which are working in every territorial authority in the country; we have put $2 million aside for extra staff to work in the most at-risk schools; we have the Student Engagement Initiative running in 100 different secondary schools in the country; we have six full-time staff at the ministry working with those*

schools; we have the electronic attendance register going in schools so that we know on a daily basis whether the students are there; and we have set up for the first time ever an electronic system called ENROL, which every school in New Zealand is now on (New Zealand Hansard, Question 08, 30.07.2008).

Hon. JOHN HOWARD: *In reply to that question: the most important thing about economic management is the human dividend it produces. Those who sit opposite who seek to look only at the politics of the situations should be reminded that the greatest thing* <u>*this government*</u> *has achieved over the last 11½ years is to have driven the unemployment rate down to a 33-year low* (Australian Hansard, Question 02, 08.08.2007).

Negative aspects of the Government's work:

Hon. TONY RYALL: *Does the Minister realise that he just said that the time had come for nationally consistent data and for nationally consistent reporting, yet that is the very thing that was recommended to Annette King in 2001? When New South Wales brought in a system to monitor this matter, it saved lives.* <u>*This Government*</u> *has done nothing, and what explanation does it have for that?* (New Zealand Hansard, Question 05, 20.02.2008).

The PLIs *"her government"* (28 instances of use in the New Zealand Parliament) and *"his government"* (4 instances in the Australian Parliament) are also used by the Opposition MPs to emphasise negative aspects of the Governments' work.

The following expressions *"The people of Australia"* (15 instances) and *"The people of New Zealand"* (9 instances) are also used by MPs to show how the Government policies will be to people's benefit or disadvantage.

5. Summary of Chapter 6

This Chapter has looked at Parliamentary Question Time as a discourse community where the behaviour and speech of its participants are regulated by strict rules. This has resulted in the emergence of a particular speech genre and a set of formulae associated with this genre, which the participants of the discourse community use while interacting with each other.

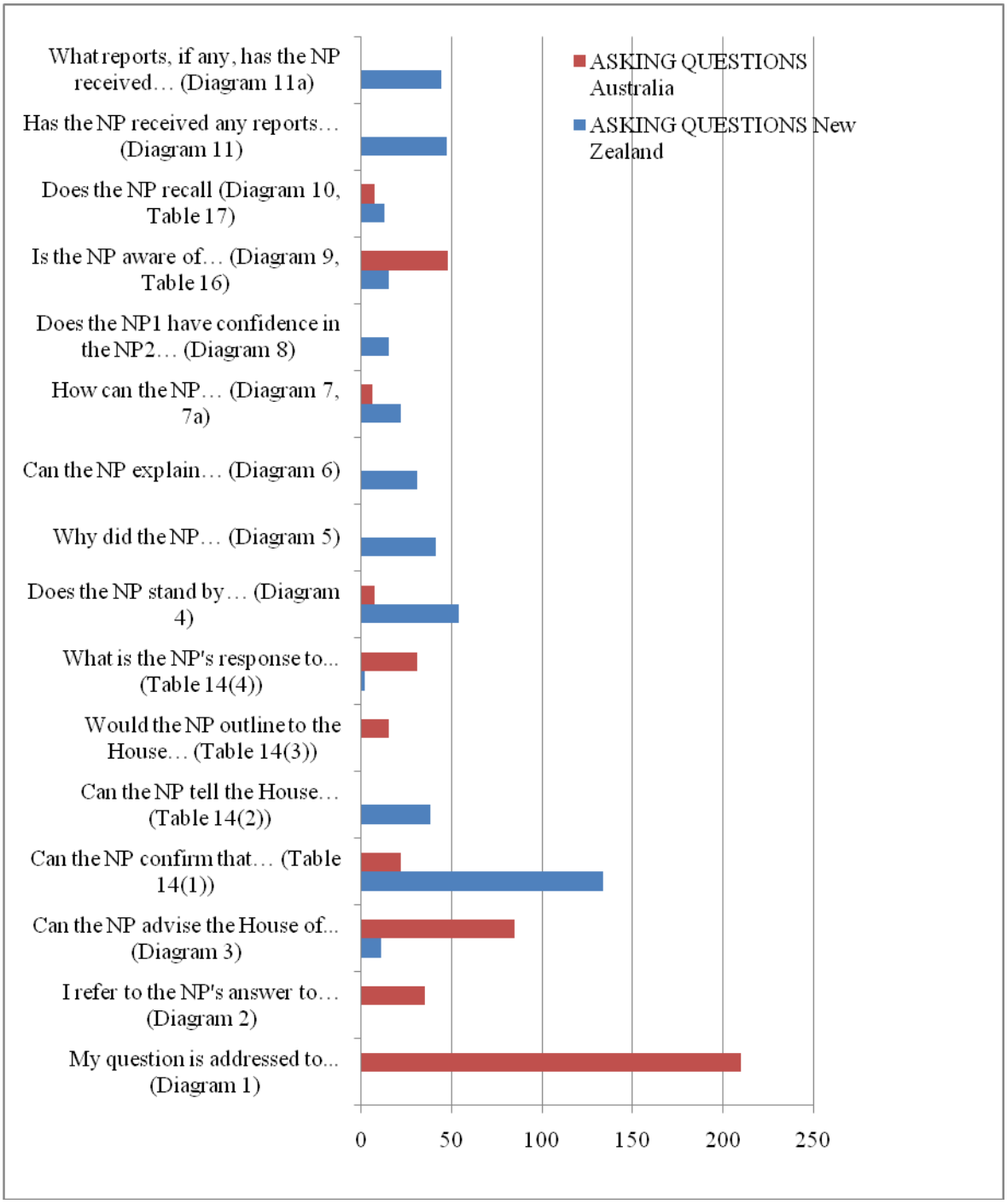
There are two types of participants in the Parliament: the Speaker of the House and the MPs. The Speaker is given a separate category because the Speaker of the House performs completely different functions to that of other Members. The Speaker does not take part in the work of the House as its participant. Instead he / she performs the duties of the Chair of the assembly regulating turn-taking in the Chamber and making sure that all the participants follow the behavioural and speech rules. The Speaker also disciplines those who disobey. Thus, the set of formulae used by the Speaker is totally different from the other MPs' formulae.

Chapter 6 presented formulae used by the Members of the House when asking and answering questions and when raising points of order on different issues. It also contains several Speakers' formulae which had to be presented as part of formulae sets (e.g. when points of order to make a personal explanation, to raise a point of order or to request a comment withdrawal were raised). The rest of the Speakers' formulae will be presented in Chapter 7 while analysing types of disorders and the ways the Speakers of the two Houses of Representatives handle them.

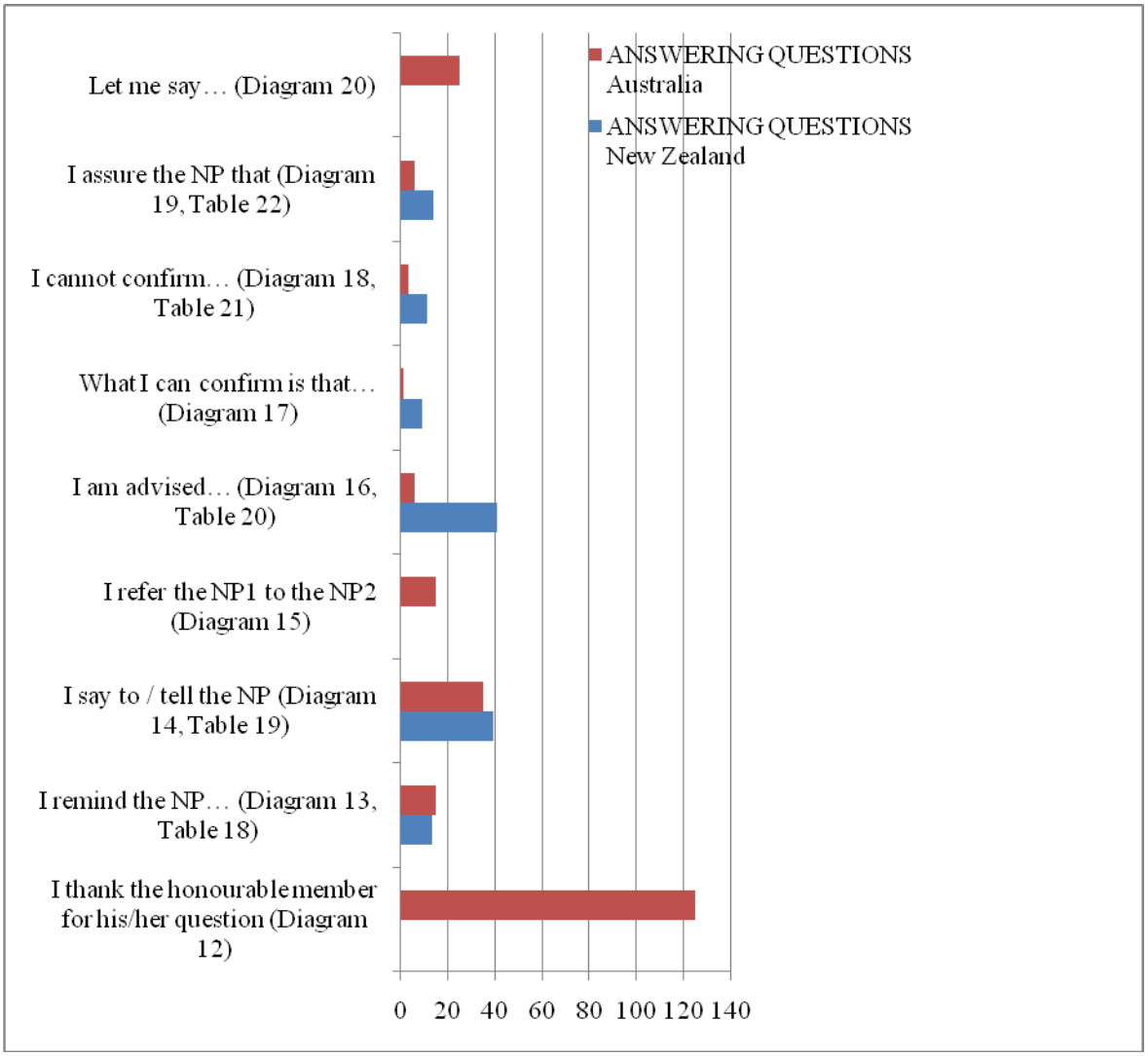
The graphs that follow present the full lists of the mentioned above formulae and show the frequency of use of those in the two Parliaments.

The data on Graph 2 shows that along with several common formulae used both in the Australian and New Zealand Parliaments there are a number of PLIs which belong to one particular Parliament only, and their frequent occurrence indicates that they are parliamentary discourse specific formulae.

As for giving answers to questions, Members in the two Parliaments use a number of similar formulae but with different frequency of occurrence. A few formulae are Australia-specific PLIs. As per Graph 3, they include such expressions as *"Let me say to the Member…", "I refer NP1 to NP2"* and *"I thank the honourable member for his/her question"*.

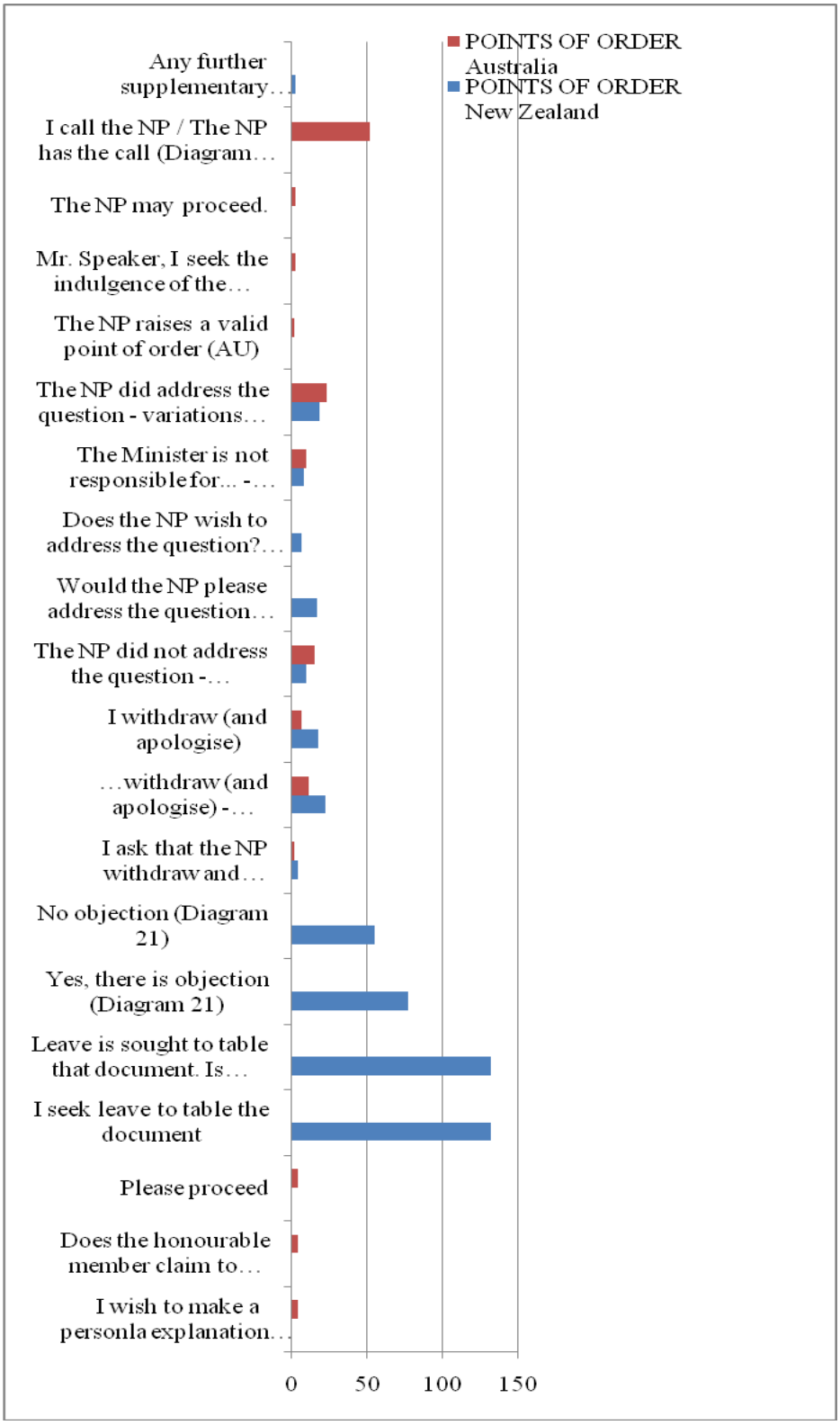


Graph 2: The full list of formulae used for asking questions, and their genrelectal use in the Australian Federal and New Zealand Parliaments.



Graph 3: The full list of formulae used for answering questions, and their genrelectal use in the Australian Federal and New Zealand Parliaments.

Graph 4 illustrates various expressions used for raising points of order in the two Parliaments. Due to different approaches to performing duties and to different Speaker's attitudes there is much diversity in the ways MPs raise their points of order and in the reasons for those.



Graph 4: The full list of formulae used for raising points of order, and their genrelectal use in the Australian Federal and New Zealand Parliaments.

Chapter 7: CREATING DISORDER: THE EFFECT OF IMPENDING ELECTIONS ON QUESTION TIME IN TWO HOUSES OF REPRESENTATIVES

1. Introduction

As it was shown in Chapter 5, Parliament is theatre, and it has a purpose other than entertainment (although that is also sometimes one of its purposes). This chapter explores the effect of two variables on one central political ritual, Question Time. They are the effect of local genrelectal traditions in the Australian Federal Parliament and the New Zealand Parliament, and the effect of an impending general election on both Houses. The hypotheses to be tested are that both variables will have an effect on the conduct of the House, specifically on the way in which disorder is created by members of the House and the way it is managed by the Speaker of the House. To do this I need to draw together in a more systemic way threads which have been evident earlier. This involves a certain degree of repetition but seemed preferable to cross referencing in terms of providing a coherent account of the diachronic data to be presented in this chapter.

2. The Speaker of the House

Recall that to control behaviour in the debating chamber Westminster Parliaments have Standing and Sessional Orders which are a complex set of rules regulating ways of behaving and counting votes in both Houses, controlling the ways the Parliament goes about its business (Refer to Chapter 4 of this work).

It is the task of the Speaker of the House to ensure that members adhere to Standing Orders, applying its rules and inflicting sanctions. The Speaker's role may be compared to the role of the master of ceremonies who 'creates art from the ensemble of media and codes, just as a conductor in the single genre of classical music blends and opposes the sounds of the different instruments to produce an often unrepeatable effect' (Turner, 1986b: 23).

However, it is not only the Speaker of the House who is required to play their role according to a certain script. All Members of the House are expected to know the regulations and follow them. Thus, everyone in the House plays a certain role, and "the roles related to a given genre are defined within certain parameters, such as responsibilities, levels of relative power and influence, division of labour, channels of and access to information, and the obligation and freedom to report. These generic characteristics of role and relationship

determine what can and cannot be done and said by particular individuals, as well as when, how, where and to whom" (Paré & Smart, 1994: 149). Thus, a smooth flow of parliamentary sittings is achieved by the correct application of the genre regulations in the House and playing their parts by the Members according to the genre rules.

Both the Speaker's position in the Chamber and the role in the House are central because he / she is responsible for ensuring that parliamentary procedures are run in the prescribed way, and for maintaining order in the House. The Speaker is entitled to use certain devices that will be recognised by other participants as communicative markers or models regulating their behaviour and procedures in the Chamber. Bergmann and Luckmann (1995: 290-291) say, that the use of such models occurs in certain clearly defined types of social situations when the actor is forced to use a particular communicative genre because "the elementary function of communicative genres in social life is to organize, routinize, and render (more or less) obligatory solutions to recurrent communicative problems. Thus, a Parliament Speaker is expected to use a set of formalised utterances pre-designed for every potential situation.

If one takes a closer look at the Speakers of the two Houses, they will see that both of them have been in the Parliaments for quite a long time. Hon. Margaret Wilson of the New Zealand Parliament had spent nine years in the debating

Chamber and Hon. David Hawker – twenty-four. During the period of their parliamentary service both of them took a number of parliamentary and party positions ranging from list members to ministerial portfolios. While being a regular participant in a particular social activity, one acquires the understanding of the activity structure, its rules, typical forms of communication between its members, etc. In other words, one acquires a notion of a particular genre – "a complex pattern of repeated social activity and rhetorical performance arising in response to a recurrent situation" (Paré & Smart, 1994: 146).

A Speaker's role requires a lot from the person playing this part. To perform his or her duties effectively the Speaker must listen to the content of questions and answers to determine whether they are relevant, whether there has been a breach of Standing Orders and, if there has been, to maintain order in the House since Members may deliberately break the rules in order to show their political opponents in an unfavourable light. In spite of the fact that Standing Orders give strict guidelines for the Speakers on how to rule in the House and the fact that they have had an opportunity to see other Speakers' work and acquire the proper ruling style, the ways of applying rules in the House by the two Speakers are totally different (Refer to Chapter 5 of this work). This is can be explained by a number of factors:

- different genders. Women have always been considered to have a softer and more tolerant character then men: “[women] are likely to be more polite than men who are in control” because “[i]t seems possible that women and men may have different perceptions of appropriate linguistic behaviour in different contexts” (Holmes, 1995: 8, 21).
- different professional backgrounds. While Hon. David Hawker’s background is in farm management, Hon. Margaret Wilson was an academic lawyer, and this found reflection in her ruling style where she proved to be impartial, tolerant and law-obedient, i.e. she showed the essential qualities of a good lawyer.
- different cultural values. New Zealand is known to be the first country in the world to grant women emancipation. Apart from other things this found its reflection in women taking leading roles in the Parliament (both the Prime Minister and the Speaker of the House being women). New Zealanders appear also to be more open-minded in such questions as same-sex relationships than Australians (although Senator Penny Wong in the current Australian Senate is gay). For example, as my database shows, six MPs of the New Zealand Parliament openly declared being homosexual while in the Australian Parliament all the Members were heterosexual (or declared themselves to be so). In terms of ethnic groups represented in the two Parliaments, out of 123 New Zealand MPs there are 16 Maori and 17 non New Zealand born Members, which makes up

about 25 per cent of the Parliament. The following ethnic groups are presented: 8 Europeans, 3 Asians, 5 Pacific Islanders and 1 Australian. In the Australian Chamber the proportion is much lower (15 non Australia born MPs out of the total number of 148 Members, which makes up about 10 per cent of the House). Among them there are 9 Europeans, 3 Africans (South Africans), 1 Asian, 1 New Zealander and 1 Pacific Islander.

All these factors, together with other factors of more personal nature, shape a personality and predetermine the way people act and speak in certain situations. If a group of people share common factors then "the conduct of individual actors reproduces the structural properties of larger collectivities" (Giddens, 1984: 24). "Social actors *create* recurrence in their actions by reproducing the structural aspects of institutions, by using available structures as the medium of their action and thereby producing those structures again as virtual outcomes, available for further memory, interpretation and use" (Miller, 1994: 71). Thus, idiolects, as well as genres "emerge within a particular socio-historical context and are reinforced over time as a situation recurs [...] These genres, in turn, shape future responses to similar situations" (Yates & Orlikowski, 1992: 305)

Different styles of ruling set the atmosphere in the debating Chamber and result in different approaches to handling similar situations. Table 13 shows typical

rulings of the two Speakers. It also illustrates the ways the Speakers have of maintaining order.

	New Zealand Speaker, Hon. Margaret Wilson	**Australian Speaker, Hon. David Hawker**
Calling MPs to order	***I ask for order.*** *Members will be asked to leave the Chamber. Would the member please proceed with his question?* (Question 12, 13.02.2008)	***Order!*** *The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is warned!* (Question 17, 28.02.2007)
Asking MPs to address each other by a correct title	*It was very difficult to hear the Minister's response. I would also remind members that when they are making their points of order* ***they must refer to members by their correct titles.*** (Question 4, 21.05.2008)	*Order! In calling the Prime Minister,* ***I would ask the Leader of the Opposition not to use the word 'you'.*** (Question 5, 07.02.2007)
Pointing out to MPs that the point of order raised by them was not a point of order	***That is not a point of order, Mr. Brownlee****. Points of order that are not points of order and that are repeated create disorder.* (Question 4, 20.02.2008)	*The member for Melbourne will resume his seat.* ***That is not a point of order.*** *The Prime Minister is in order and the Prime Minister will be heard.* (Question 3, 21.03.2007)
Calling for silence in the Chamber	***Keep the noise level down, please.*** (Question 10, 13.02.2008)	*Order!* ***The level of noise is far too high.*** *The minister has the call.* (Question 18, 07.02.2007)
Indicating to MPs that there are too many interjections	***I just ask members to keep the level of interjections down so that other members can, in fact, be heard.*** *Would the member please complete his question?* (Question 1, 02.07.2008)	*Order! The Prime Minister will resume his seat.* ***The level of interjections is far too high. The Prime Minister will be heard!*** (Question 3, 28.02.2007)
Asking MPs to resume their seat	***Please be seated, Dr. Smith.*** (Question 11, 12.03.2008)	*Order!* ***The Treasurer will resume his seat.*** (Question 6, 21.03.2007)
Warning MPs	*There have been interruptions from all sides, I am afraid, but* ***you are all on your last warning.*** *Thank you for reminding me, and*	*Order!* ***The member for Melbourne is warned!*** (Question 8, 07.02.2007)

	that goes for both, and all, front benches. (Question 3, 20.02.2008)	
Telling MPs to leave the Chamber	*It is impossible to hear. Members say "Answer the question." We will hear the answer in silence so that we can all hear the answer. [Interruption]* ***The member will leave the Chamber if he interrupts when the question is being answered.*** (Question 7, 12.03.2008)	*The member for Hindmarsh has been warned; he continues to interject.* ***He will remove himself under standing order 94(a).*** (Question 12, 14.02.2007)
Requesting that MPs withdraw the last remark (and apologise)	***Would the member please withdraw and apologise.*** (Question 4, 19.03.2008)	*Order!* ***The minister will withdraw that statement.*** (Question 12, 15.08.2007)

Table 26: Typical rulings of the New Zealand and Australian Speakers.

Genres and individual idiolects emerge as a result of particular expressions reoccurring in speech of community groups or individuals. Formulaic expressions are the keystones of genres and idiolects as the preferential use of particular formulae and the influence of certain extra-linguistic factors shape a speaker's style. Therefore, the study of linguistic formulae will input to the study of genres and idiolects. "Central to any formulaic genre are discourse structure rules and an inventory of formulae" (Kuiper, 2009: 96).

The following subsections will take a closer look at the devices which MPs in the two Parliaments employ to create disorder, and formulae used by the two Speakers to rule their Houses.

3. Disorder in the House

Up until recently maintaining of social equilibrium and sharing cultural norms were considered to be the primary basis for the creation of groups at all levels of social 'integration', whereas conflict was often considered to be an abnormal or pathological state that must be resolved in order to ensure the 'survival' of the collectivity. However, discourse analysis has helped scholars to view conflict as a crucial part of the social construction of reality (Briggs, 1996b: 4). Schiffrin (1984) suggests, that arguing can serve as important means of conveying sociability among adults.

Conflict is an undeniable part of daily parliamentary routine and "ritual performance […] makes explicit the conflicts and indeterminacies of social life" (McAllister, 2012: 19). Harris (2001: 466) says, that "systematic impoliteness is not only sanctioned in […] Question Time but is rewarded in accordance with the expectations of the Members of the House (and the overhearing audience) by an adversarial and confrontational political process" because, in her opinion, Parliaments "are based on adversarial discourse practices". Unparliamentary behaviour manifests itself in various types of conflicting and/or disorderly situations that MPs set up in attempt to achieve their political goals.

3.1. Creating disorder

This research has identified the following types of disorderly behaviour that Shaw (2000) terms as “illegal interventions”:

- incorrect forms of address
- unparliamentary language
- accusations of lying.

3.1.1. Incorrect forms of address

There is a rule in both Parliaments that indirect form of address in the third person should be used. Titles should be observed when addressing other Members. Questions and answers should be directed not to MPs but to the Speaker of the House. Harris (2001: 464) believes, that “the use of indirection and third person syntactic forms as a mode of address, and the reference to titles rather than names of Members to whom reference is made, is obviously meant to ensure that the debates have a certain level of formality”.

In the New Zealand Parliament, however, a new rule was adopted recently allowing the Members to refer to each other by their full names as many MPs are elected from the party lists under the MMP election system and they do not

have electorates by which they could be referred, (McGee, 2005: 183). The use of first names alone is still unacceptable, e.g.:

> **RON MARK:** *The point is that that there is the possibility that we will end up with the situation where the video and the DVD show Mr. English saying precisely what my leader, Winston Peters, said he said and the written copy reflects what Gerry Brownlee claims he said, which is not accurate* (New Zealand Hansard, Question 06, 09.04.2008).

In the Australian Parliament, following the Westminster tradition, the MPs are called 'Honourable Members'. They may not direct their remarks at opponents, but must instead refer to them in the third person through the Chair. They also cannot call addressees by name, but instead only by the name of their electoral constituency (Young, 2007: 241).

> **ROGER PRICE:** *My question without notice is to the Prime Minister. I refer to the Prime Minister's comments in the House yesterday describing those expressing concerns about the siting of nuclear reactors as 'juvenile and idiotic'. Prime Minister, which of the following members—the members for Flinders, Menzies, Gilmore, Curtin, McMillan and Leichhardt—are (a) juvenile (b) idiots or (c) all of the above?* (Australian Parliament, Question 15, 28.02.2007).

Do MPs behave in accordance with the Standing Orders and always use required forms of address? No. Using improper forms of address is probably the most common way of breaching the rules of the House and the Speakers often ignore this, e.g.:

> **LOCKWOOD SMITH:** *You just made that up then, Jim, didn't you?*
>
> **PAREKURA HOROMIA:** *No, it is not made up. That is the truth. The production that has come off Maori assets has gone up by 62 percent. When we came into Government the unemployment rate in Tai Rawhiti was tracking at 28 percent—28 percent, I say to Tau! Now it is tracking at just over 5 percent. Wake up!* (New Zealand Hansard, Question 12, 25.06.2008).

In the Australian Parliament, even after it was brought to the Speaker's attention that an incorrect form of address was used by a Government MP, no action would follow as the Speaker openly supported the Government Party and ignored breaches of rules by Government MPs while punishing severely the Opposition Members even for a minor case of misconduct:

> Mr. Swan interjecting—
>
> **PETER COSTELLO—***The unit of production from the seat of Lilley interjects.*
>
> **ROGER PRICE—***I rise on a point of order. Mr. Speaker, the standing orders require the Treasurer to address members by their seat or title.*

> **Mr. SPEAKER**—*I was listening carefully and I* <u>*believe that the Treasurer has been using the correct form of address*</u>*.*
>
> **PETER COSTELLO**—*May I say* <u>*that the member for Lilley is a very low-productivity unit of production*</u>*. The Leader of the Opposition said: 'If employers and employees are working together as units of production—as firms—that is how in fact you best yield the best productive outcome.'...* (Australian Parliament, Question 08, 28.03.2007).

Rasiah, who studied evasion during Parliamentary Question Time in the Australian Federal House of Representatives (2007a), in her submission to the Standing Committee on Procedures of the Australian Federal Parliament (2007b: 13), among other recommendations on the improvement of Question Time quality, suggested, that "the Speaker should be bipartisan or selected by the Government in consultation with non-Government parties. If the best available individual was so selected, he/she would be better able to take control of the House and command greater respect from both sides".

While analysing the data it was discovered that the tighter reign on the Australian House lowered the number of institutional breaches of order but did not depress the interpersonal breaches of order. Thus, many of the Members' remarks in the Australian House were personal. This found reflection even in the use of improper forms of address. Often when asking questions MPs tended to describe the situation first and then their question would follow in the last

sentence of their speech where they would use the proper title together with the pronoun ‘you’ thus making the question more personal, e.g.:

> **KEVIN RUDD:** *My question is again to the Prime Minister. Will the Prime Minister now confirm, firstly, that in 2005-06 education outlays as a percentage of total government outlays stand at 7.7 per cent of budget, according to the government’s own papers; secondly, that in 2010-11 education outlays as a percentage of total government outlays in fact stand at 7.4 per cent of budget according to the government’s own papers; and, finally, that 7.4 per cent is less than 7.7 per cent? Prime Minister, haven’t* ***you*** *simply got* ***your*** *answer to this question fundamentally and totally wrong?* (Australian Parliament, Question 15, 09.05.2007).

> **ANDREW LAMING:** *My question is addressed to the Treasurer. Would the Treasurer inform the House about changes to the tax system that will come into effect on 1 July? Treasurer, are* ***you*** *aware of any alternative policies?* (Australian Parliament, Question 08, 20.06.2007).

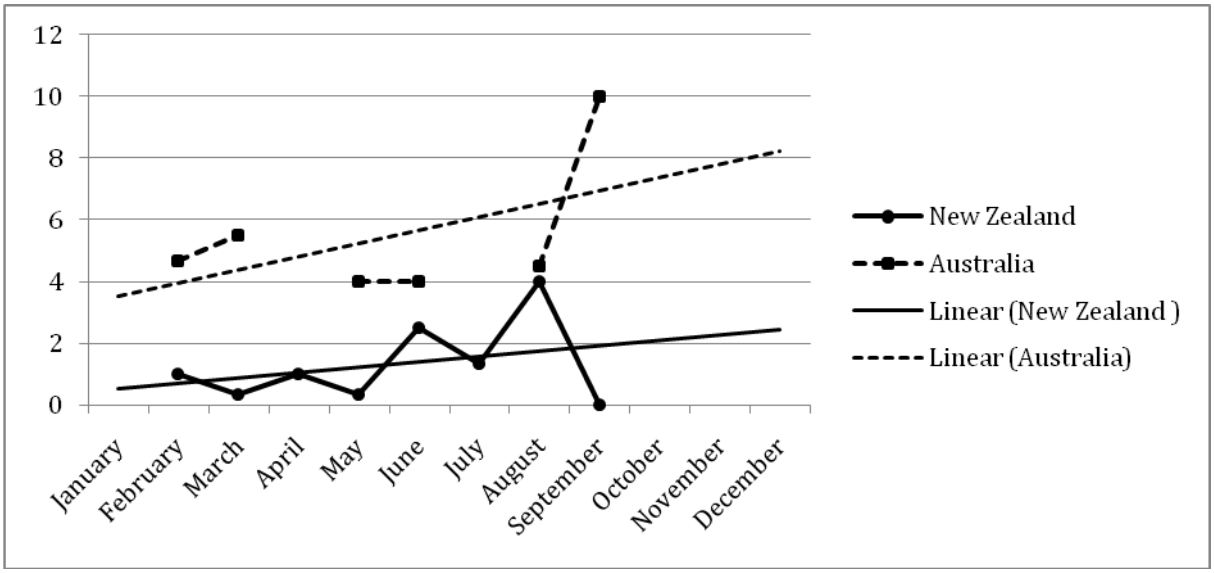
The following types of unauthorized forms of address used in the two Parliaments were identified:

- addressing MPs by their first names rather than by their titles;
- using the pronoun ‘you’ instead of the third person singular pronouns;
- addressing the Members rather than the Chair.

Table 27 and Graph 5 below outline the statistics of the incorrect forms of address use in the two Parliaments in the leadup to the respective general elections:

	New Zealand Parliament (average number of utterances per month, 2008)	**Australian Parliament (average number of utterances per month, 2007)**
January		
February	1	4.666667
March	0.333333	5.5
April	1	
May	0.333333	4
June	2.5	4
July	1.333333	
August	4	4.5
September	0	10
October		
November		
December		

Table 27: The average number of improper forms of address per month in the Australian and New Zealand Parliaments.



Graph 5: The frequency of occurrence of improper forms of address in the New Zealand and Australian Parliaments and general trends of their use towards the end of pre-election years.

The data shows that there is a steady upward trend of incorrect forms of address use in the New Zealand and Australian Federal Parliaments.

3.1.2. Unparliamentary language

Although Standing Orders prohibit certain unparliamentary references, expressions and figures of speech, as well as arguments, inferences, imputations, epithets, ironical expressions and expressions of opinion, this technique is widely used by MPs to show their disapproval of policies and decisions of their political opponents because, as Harris states it in (2001: 466), "Members of Parliament as a community of practice clearly perceive that the main role of the political opposition is to oppose, i.e. to criticize, challenge, ridicule, subvert, etc. the policies and positions of Government". This is necessary "in order to give voters on election day the possibility of making informed decisions between the two different political teams and policy packages" (Kaiser, 2008: 21). Unfortunately, some parliamentarians appear to believe, that the best way to oppose is to insult the other party's members.

The following types of unparliamentary language were used during Question Time: swear words, name calling and derogatory remarks. The table below presents some examples of these categories:

	New Zealand Parliament	**Australian Federal Parliament**
Swear words	**SUE BRADFORD:** *What steps, then, is the Ministry of Social Development taking to prevent a repeat of the recent incident in Rotorua where Tara Marks was told to "fuck off" by a smirking case manager as she, with a baby in her arms, applied for a food grant?* (New Zealand Hansard, Question 04, 06.08.2008).	**BRONWYN BISHOP:** *Are you doing a smart-arse act?* **CATHERINE KING:** *Did you just hear what she said? That is unparliamentary language. She said 'smart-arse'* (Australian Hansard, Question to the Speaker 3, 12.09.2007).
Name calling	**WINSTON PETERS:** *I raise a point of order, Madam Speaker. I have asked a simple question to do with a good, sound, forward vision for our environment, and all I hear is a barrage of reports in here, including from, of all people, "Bob the Quitter". I would have thought by now that he would keep his mouth shut, but no, he is shouting out as loudly as he can, although he does not have the guts to face me in Tauranga any more.* *[…]* **GERRY BROWNLEE:** *I raise a point of order, Madam Speaker. Surely Mr. Peters should be asked to withdraw and apologise for that remark; otherwise, we will be referring to him as "Winston the Bitter"* (New Zealand Hansard, Question 04, 21.05.2008).	**TONY ABBOTT:** *...Not for nothing was this guy known as Dr. Death when he was the director-general of the Christian socialist government of Queensland. From what we have seen from him lately, I think he is suffering from a chronic condition himself. It is called TDD: truth deficit disorder. That is what we have seen from the Leader of the Opposition over the last few days. Let me say of the Leader of the Opposition, if he is untrustworthy with the truth, you certainly cannot trust him with Medicare.* (Australian Hansard, Question 14, 30.05.2007).
Derogatory remarks	**CHRIS CARTER:** *If Mr. English's understanding of the English language is different from mine—and I guess he does come from Southland—I will repeat my answer* (New Zealand Hansard, Question 08, 27.08.2008).	**PETER COSTELLO:** *Ah, Mr. Speaker, let us pretend to have a conversation about the Future Fund now! Then we will turn and pretend to have a conversation about education policy! The people of Australia need to know this: the*

		Leader of the Opposition studiously turns his back in the parliament on a daily basis. Hooray! The Leader of the Opposition has just turned around to face the music. The people of Australia ought to know this: the Leader of the Opposition, if he wants to become Prime Minister, has got to face challenges front on and not with his back (Australian Hansard, Question 06, 21.03.2007).

Table 28: Examples of unparliamentary language in the New Zealand and Australian Parliaments.

One might think that during a pre-election year it is the Prime Minister who is criticised most because, as Harris points out in (2001: 466), the Leader of the Opposition "is likely to regard his reputation as a skillful and effective adversary as a significant measure of his political success in his role as Leader, whereby he can best enhance his own 'face' by threatening that of the Prime Minister" because "by being seen to challenge the face of the Prime Minister, he attempts to subvert or undermine the credibility and competence of the Government as a whole". It was partially the case in the Australian Federal Parliament of 2007 where the Prime Minister, John Howard, would occasionally get criticised by the Opposition, e.g.:

> **KEVIN RUDD:** *My question is again to the Prime Minister and refers to his answer to the previous question. Did the Prime Minister receive government reports on emissions trading in March 1999, June 1999, October 1999 and December 1999? Did the government say no to each of these reports and then disband the emissions trading*

team in the Australian Greenhouse Office? Given that the Prime Minister has ignored all the climate change warning bells in the past, why should Australians believe him on climate change for the future? (Australian Hansard, Question 03, 07.02.2007).

However, it is the Leader of the Opposition who gets most of the criticism in the Australian Debating Chamber, and those remarks become more and more personal towards the end of the year, e.g.:

JULIE BISHOP: *...One thing I can say about the Leader of the Opposition: he has not had an original policy thought on anything, let alone education. He talks about his education revolution. Naughty boy! You stole that idea, didn't you? […] You will have to go to the naughty corner, won't you?* (Australian Hansard, Question 09, 28.02.2007).

JOHN HOWARD: *I thank the Leader of the Opposition for concentrating on productivity. He is demonstrating yet again an abysmal misunderstanding of some fundamental economic concepts...* (Australian Hansard, Question 01, 20.06.2007).

PETER COSTELLO: *...The Leader of the Opposition does not know what the Australian taxation system is. He does not understand it and he should never be put in charge of people's mortgages, their businesses or their jobs. Underneath the glib responses, underneath the media stunts and underneath the practised indifference—where he still has his back turned as if he is in deep conversation about nothing so that he does not have to front up to this ignorance—there is no economic substance. He has never cared about economic policy. He has no interest in it. He has never understood*

economic policy. He was exposed as a fraud on productivity and we do not hear him talking about productivity very much anymore. And now he has been exposed as being naked when it comes to understanding the tax system... (Australian Hansard, Question 02, 19.09.2007).

MARK VAILE: *...But what it indicates to us is that the Leader of the Opposition cannot make decisions. If he cannot make a decision, you cannot lead this country. If you cannot make a decision, you cannot manage a $1.1 trillion economy* (Australian Hansard, Question 08, 19.09.2007).

These types of comment usually come at the end of an answer (or question), and those, who make them need to be very creative for the comment to hit the target. In his study of Australian Parliamentary questions (2008: 105-106), Fenton-Smith calls them "rhetorical hooks" – "concluding remarks that add rhetorical punch at the end of a speaking turn". He explains that these comments do not require any response because "it is a snappy concluding line that is more of a media sound bite than a conventional demand". This type of comment is not typical of the New Zealand Parliamentary questions or answers.

In the New Zealand Parliament offensive comments are of more institutional character, e.g.:

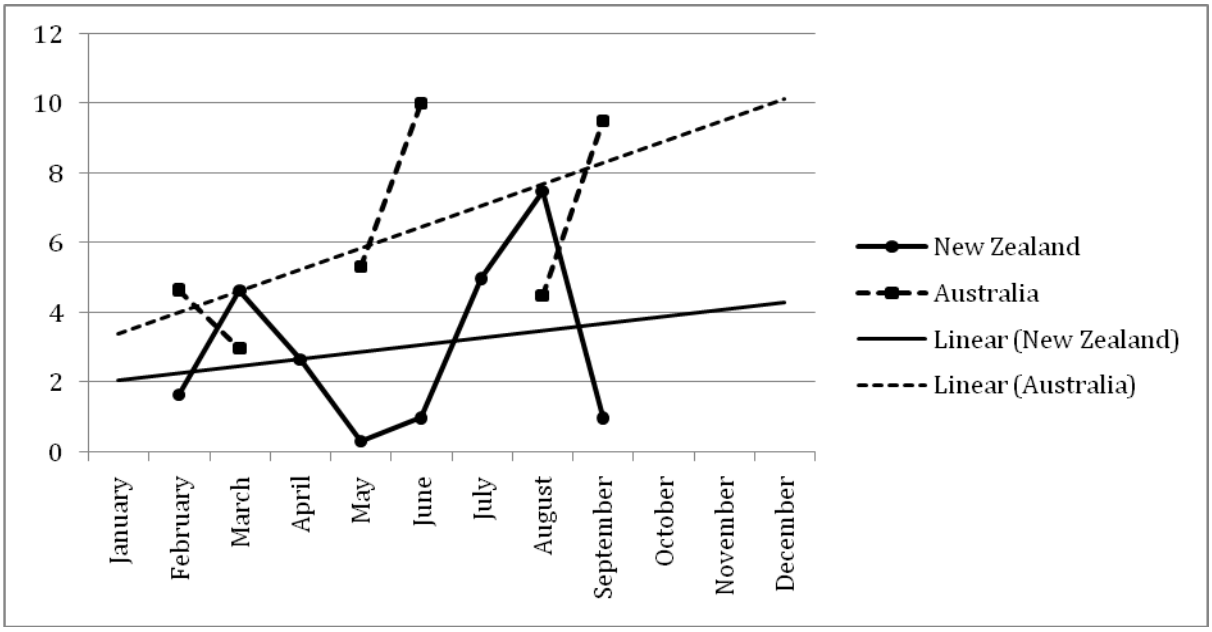
NICK SMITH: *It's a stupid policy!* (New Zealand Hansard, Question 08, 19.03.2008).

HONE HARAWIRA: *Is the Minister expecting a legal challenge from those beneficiaries whose money the Government is stealing to establish a development bank; if so, will he also be recommending that legislation be passed to deny those beneficiaries the right to legal aid to challenge that debt*— (New Zealand Hansard, Question 11, 19.03.2008).

Similar to the use of unauthorized forms of address in the two Parliaments the data in Table 29 and Graph 6 show upward trends in use of unparliamentary language in an election year.

	New Zealand Parliament (average number of utterances per month, 2008)	**Australian Parliament (average number of utterances per month, 2007)**
January		
February	1.666667	4.666667
March	4.666667	3
April	2.666667	
May	0.333333	5.333333
June	1	10
July	5	
August	7.5	4.5
September	1	9.5
October		
November		
December		

Table 29: The average number of instances of unparliamentary language use per month in the Australian and New Zealand Parliaments.



Graph 6: The frequency of instances of unparliamentary language use occurrences in the New Zealand and Australian Parliaments and general trends of their use towards the end of pre-election years.

3.1.3. Telling lies

As discussed in Chapter 4, accusations of telling lies are strictly out of order in the Parliaments. If such an accusation is made in the House, MPs are supposed to withdraw their comment. The Speaker of the Australian Parliament was much stricter than the NZ Speaker. Thus, there were no direct accusations of telling lies from the Opposition Members in 2007 in the Australian Parliament. However, since the Australian Speaker showed a deal of support of the Government Party and tended to ignore any breach of rules by the Liberal Party

MPs, the Government MPs were given more freedom in the House. There were two periphrastic cases of lie accusations by a Government MP in 2007:

> ***JOHN HOWARD****: [...] What the Leader of the Opposition has deliberately done is to take what is by definition a measurement of productivity that would yield a low result and compare it with measurements of productivity which by definition would yield higher results. In the process, he has deliberately set out to mislead the Australian public in relation to this issue. He did not disclose this in the interview that he gave this morning. He must have known—or after the interview he would have been told by his advisers—that he had misled the Australian public. Once again we have the Leader of the Opposition faced with the dilemma of confessing to one of two sins: is he ignorant of what productivity represents in this country or, if not ignorant, has he deliberately misled the Australian public by falsely comparing a set of figures with another set of figures, knowing full well that the measurements and the definitions of those two figures are quite different?...What the Leader of the Opposition did was to conflate the two in the interview this morning to give a completely false impression and to continue the process of deceiving and misleading the Australian people on what he says is the centrepiece of his economic attack on the government. The Leader of the Opposition ought to lift his head from his papers and face the reality that, again, he has deliberately deceived the Australian people* (Australian Hansard, Question 02, 20.06.2007).

> **ANDREW ROBB:** *I thank the member for Macquarie for his question. Over recent months, in the absence of any worthwhile policy ideas on the other side of the House, they have resorted to asserting that the government has done nothing on skills—and*

the Leader of the Opposition was at it again this morning. This is just not true; it is a political lie, and the Leader of the Opposition knows it [...] (Australian Hansard, Question 18, 08.08.2007).

In both examples it is the Leader of the Opposition who is attacked. To make their point more plausible the Ministers repeatedly presented the idea to the House. No rulings returning the Ministers to order were given in both cases. Moreover, this was happening even when the motion of dissent from Speaker's ruling was put forward and Hon. Tony Abbott, the Leader of the House, accused Anthony Albanese of 'telling untruth' 8 times. When a point of order was raised, the Speaker still considered that Hon. Tony Abbott was in order:

Hon. TONY ABBOTT: *If the Manager of Opposition Business is going to be taken seriously, he should tell the truth. In the course of his contribution he made two statements that he knows to be untrue. First of all, he claimed that if this motion of dissent is carried you are out of a job. He knows that that is not true. There have been many motions of dissent. Some have been passed in this House and the speakers against whom they have been passed have not lost their jobs. It is only a motion of want of confidence in the Speaker that has the effect that the Manager of Opposition Business claimed. But a more important untruth is that he claimed in his contribution that more people had been suspended from the House under your speakership than ever before. That is absolutely untrue. It is completely untrue. He knows it is untrue and he should not make that kind of misleading statement before this House. This Manager of Opposition Business has no regard for the truth. He has no regard for*

parliamentary standards. The motion that he has moved cannot be taken seriously by this House.

WAYNE SWAN: *I rise on a point of order. Could you bring him back to order?*

Mr. SPEAKER: *The Leader of the House is responding to the motion moved by the Manager of Opposition Business.* ***He is entirely in order*** (Australian Hansard, Dissent from Ruling, 19.09.2007).

Therefore, in return, the inventive Opposition MPs had to find some ways of attacking the Ministers. Bloch claims in (1975: 5), that it is much more important how things are said than what is said in the Parliament: 'the reason why there is such stress on the manner in which things are said rather than on what is said, seems to be that by defining and regulating the manner the content is also, albeit indirectly, restricted'. Thus, the following indirect accusations of telling lies were used by MPs at Question Time, e.g.:

JULIA GILLARD: *Not true!* (Australian Hansard, Question 11, 09.05.2007).

Hon. ARCH BEVIS: *In answer to what proposition? Try telling the truth for once* (Australian Hansard, Question 18, 15.08.2007).

PATRICK SECKER: *I wouldn't believe that one!* (Australian Hansard, Question 17, 28.02.2007).

In the New Zealand Parliament, as it is the case with unparliamentary expressions, the accusations of telling lies are of institutional character. They are less personally offensive as well, and the Speaker of the House demanded that such comments were immediately withdrawn and apologised for, e.g.:

> **GERRY BROWNLEE:** *Well, Madam Speaker, I do not consider that it was unparliamentary. Perhaps the member would like to tell me which comment it was. Was it the comment that the member should ask for his money back for his anger management courses, or* <u>*was it the comment that Labour lies*</u>*? If either of those is offensive, I withdraw and apologise.*
> **Madam SPEAKER:** *I think we know the rulings on allegations about lying, so from that point of view I would ask the member to please withdraw and apologise for that particular comment* (New Zealand Hansard, Question 09, 05.03.2008).

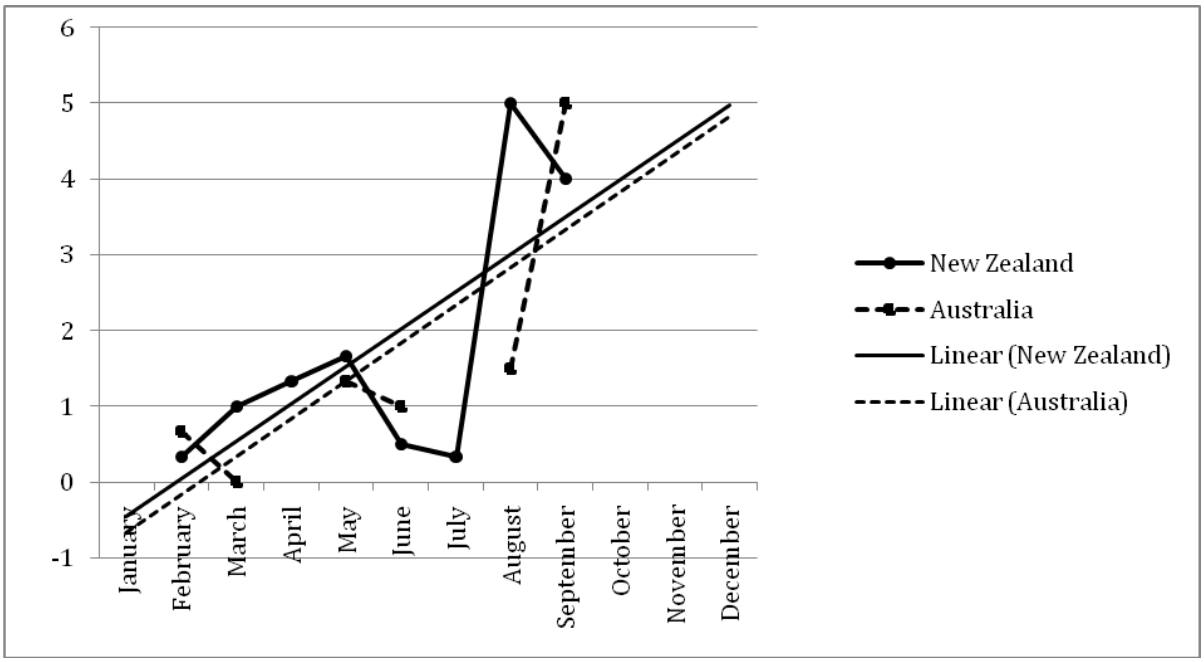
> **DAVID PARKER:** *I find it somewhat ironic that the party that has been, to be frank, whingeing for weeks that the Government will pocket $20 billion from the emissions trading scheme—*<u>*which has always been untrue*</u>*—* (New Zealand Hansard, Question 03, 27.08.2008).

It is predictable, that the number of such type of utterances should increase towards the end of election years in the two parliaments. The data in Graph 7 confirms this hypothesis and show parallel upwards trends. An accusation of telling lies is a serious offence which may lead to unpleasant consequences for offenders. The fact that MPs of the two Parliaments equally increased the use of

this debating technique in their pre-election years indicates that the pre-election tension was increasing in both Chambers.

	New Zealand Parliament (average number of utterances per month, 2008)	Australian Parliament (average number of utterances per month, 2007)
January		
February	0.333333	0.666667
March	1	0
April	1.333333	
May	1.666667	1.333333
June	0.5	1
July	0.333333	
August	5	1.5
September	4	5
October		
November		
December		

Table 30: The average number of accusations of telling lies per month in the Australian and New Zealand Parliaments.



Graph 7: The frequency of accusations of telling lies occurrences in the New Zealand and Australian Parliaments and general trends of their use towards the end of the pre-election years.

3.2. Drawing attention to disorder

As Chapter 4 showed, a considerable amount of various types of points of order is raised as a result of MPs' misconduct and desire to score political points, e.g.:

> **TREVOR MALLARD:** *I raise a point of order, Madam Speaker. Amongst that noise there was a most unparliamentary remark from Mr. Gerry Brownlee. I ask that he withdraw and apologise for it* (New Zealand Hansard, Question 09, 05.03.2008).

While in the New Zealand Parliament Members are required to describe the problem as they see it for the Speaker to rule on the allegation of misconduct, in the Australian Parliament points of order tend to be relatively short because in most instances MPs cite Standing Order numbers and there is no need for long explanations. This is both the rule of the Australian House and the demand of the Speaker who is very strict about the format of points of order and does not allow MPs who raise points of order to deliver long speeches. Thus, points of order need to be succinct and to the point. The reason or the Standing Order

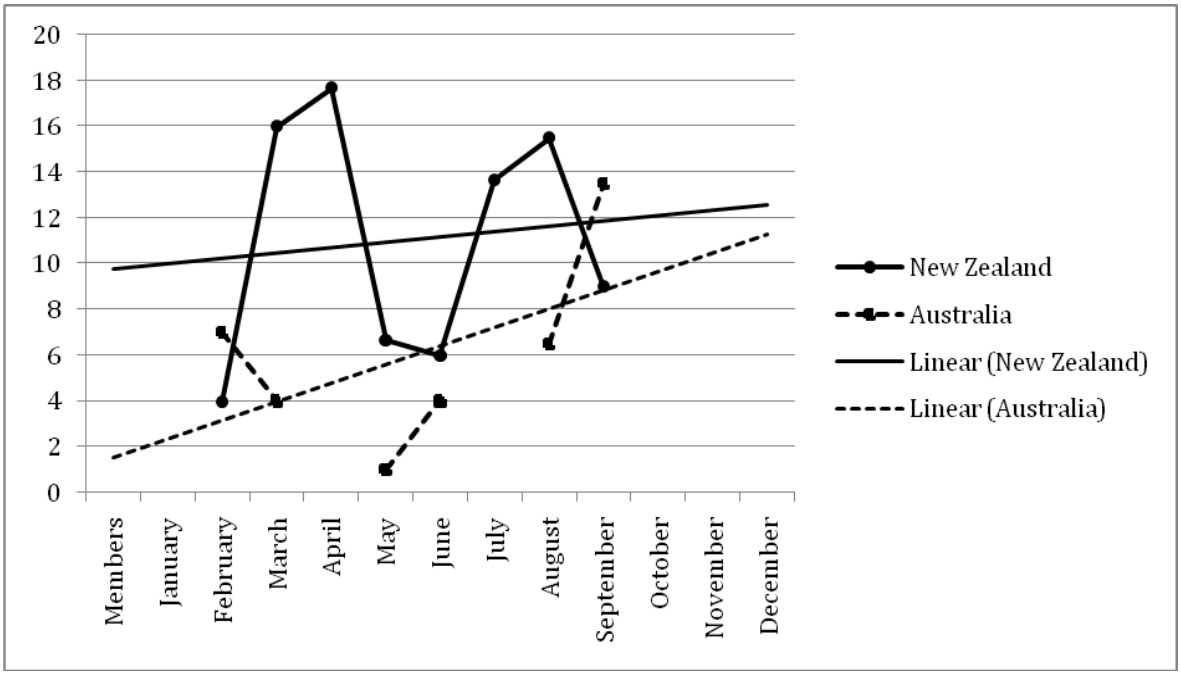
number should be explained at once, otherwise MPs risk losing their call and their point of order will be treated as a mere interruption, e.g.:

> **ROGER PRICE:** *Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I ask that you enforce standing order 64* (Australian Hansard, Question 06, 14.02.2007).

The total number of points of order raised in the New Zealand House in 2008 was 206 whereas in the Australian Parliament this figure was almost half (111). The way Hon. David Hawker ruled prevented many points of order. The data in Table 31 and Graph 8 compares the month-by-month distribution of points of order in the two Houses and looks at general trends:

	New Zealand Parliament (average number of utterances per month, 2008)	**Australian Parliament (average number of utterances per month, 2007)**
January		
February	4	7
March	16	4
April	17.66667	
May	6.66667	1
June	6	4
July	13.66667	
August	15.5	6.5
September	9	13.5
October		
November		
December		

Table 31: The average number of points of order per month in the Australian and New Zealand Parliaments.



Graph 8: The frequency of occurrence of points of order in the New Zealand and Australian Parliaments and general trends of their use towards the end of pre-election years.

It can be seen that although there are declining trends in the use of points of order in both Parliaments in the middle of the pre-election years the general trends are upward.

In the political game, MPs use points of order both for having order restored in the House and for creating it to score points. This mostly happens in the New Zealand Parliament where MPs are given more freedom. The points of order may be:

- too long and they switch the attention of the House away from the question, e.g.:

WINSTON PETERS: *I raise a point of order, Madam Speaker. I have asked a simple question to do with a good, sound, forward vision for our environment, and all I hear is a barrage of reports in here, including from, of all people, "Bob the Quitter". I would have thought by now that he would keep his mouth shut, but no, he is shouting out as loudly as he can, although he does not have the guts to face me in Tauranga any more* (New Zealand Hansard, Question 09, 05.03.2008).

- not points of order, e.g.:

JONATHAN COLEMAN: *I raise a point of order, Madam Speaker. If the member makes an assertion like that, he should back it up with proof, because that is completely untrue and a lie.*

Madam SPEAKER: *That is not a point of order. There is a general debate coming up. I remind Ministers that their answers should be short, as should the questions. Are there any further supplementary questions?* (New Zealand Hansard, Question 01, 10.09.2008).

The same types of points of order can be found in the Australian House as well. However, there are fewer of them and they are less disruptive.

3.3. Quelling disorder

There are a number of ways for Speakers to discipline MPs. This can be done, in order of increasing seriousness, by:

- directing MPs to resume their seats;
- requesting that MPs withdraw their comments (and apologise);
- warning MPs;
- directing MPs to leave the Chamber.

We will now take a closer look at these methods.

3.3.1. Directing an MP to resume his/her seat

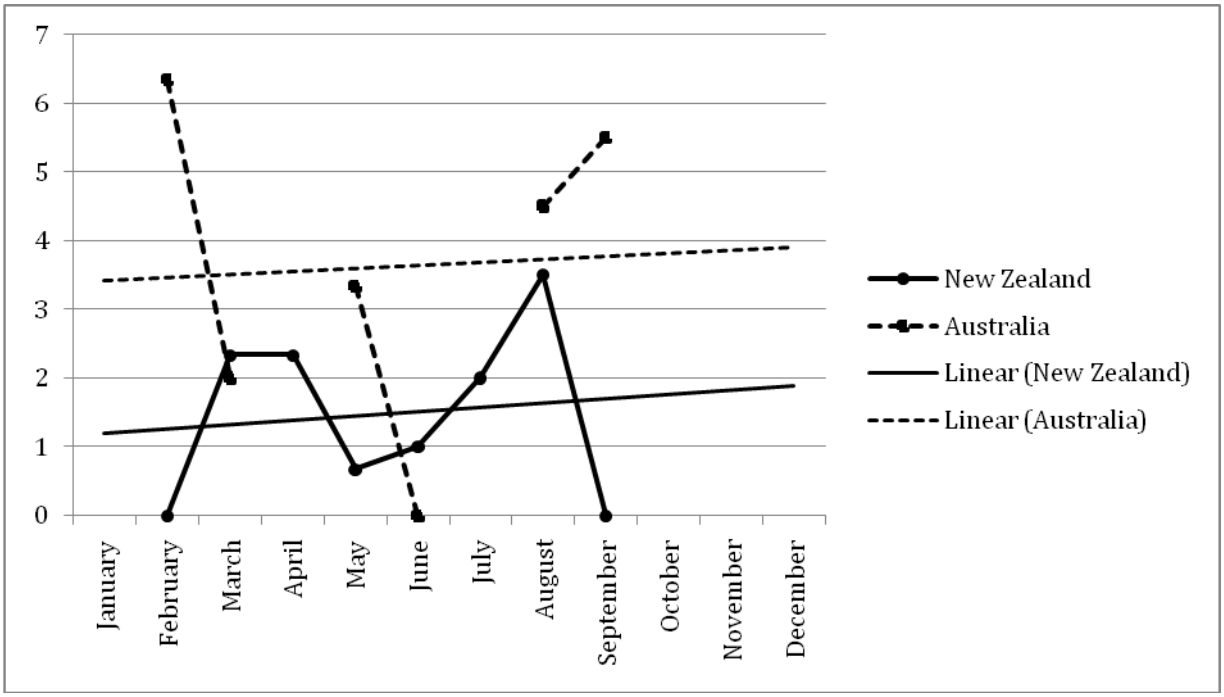
This method of bringing MPs back to order is more used by the Australian Speaker than the New Zealand one. The proportion is 51 instances during the 14 sitting days in 2007 in the Australian Parliament as compared to 31 instances in 20 sitting days in 2008 in the New Zealand Parliament. Usually this direction is used by Speakers to interrupt a Member whose utterance does not comply with Standing Orders. In this case the MP is directed to sit down (or resume their seat) for the Speaker to give his / her ruling. The typical directives from the two Speakers are as follows:

Mr. SPEAKER: *The member for Wills will resume his seat. If the member wishes to take a point of order, he will come straight to it; he will not debate it* (Australian Hansard, Question 09, 14.02.2007).

Madam SPEAKER: *Please be seated. I rule the question out of order because it is not within ministerial responsibility; it is more of a matter of debate* (New Zealand Hansard, Question 08, 21.05.2008).

	New Zealand Parliament (average number of utterances per month, 2008)	**Australian Parliament (average number of utterances per month, 2008)**
January		
February	0	6.333333
March	2.333333	2
April	2.333333	
May	0.666667	3.333333
June	1	0
July	2	
August	3.5	4.5
September	0	5.5
October		
November		
December		

Table 32: The average number of directions for MPs to resume their seats per month in the Australian and New Zealand Parliaments.



Graph 9: The frequency of occurrences of directions for MPs to resume their seats in the New Zealand and Australian Parliaments and general trends of their use towards the end of pre-election years.

The formulae used by the two Speakers to direct MPs to resume their seats are as follows:

New Zealand:

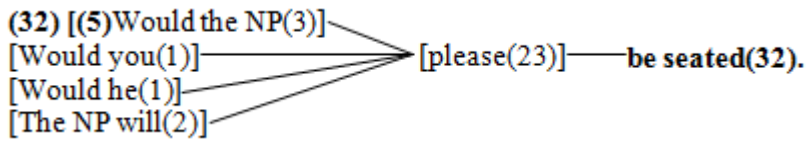


Diagram 26: The formula structure and frequencies of occurrence of *"…Please be seated"* in the New Zealand House of Representatives.

Australia:

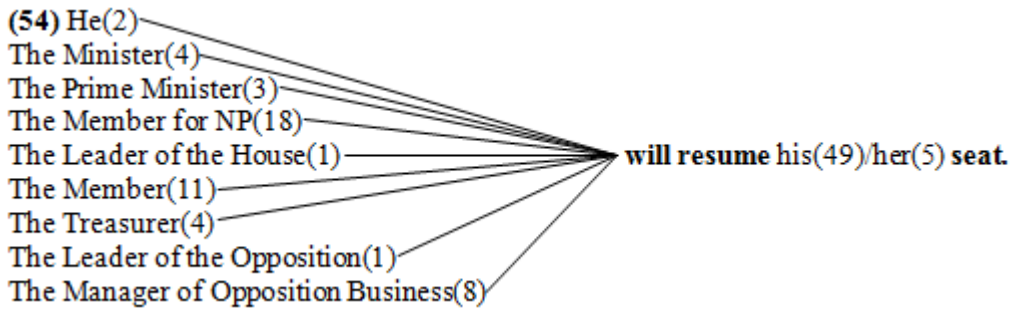


Diagram 27: The formula structure and frequencies of occurrence of *"The NP will resume his/her seat"* in the Australian House of Representatives.

3.3.2. Requesting that MPs withdraw their comments (and apologise)

When an unparliamentary comment is uttered the offender has to withdraw the comment (and apologise). This action is either directed by the Speaker or by other MPs through the Speaker by means of raising points of order.

In the Australian Parliament Members are not required to apologise – they only need to withdraw their comment, whereas in the New Zealand Parliament only comment withdrawals together with apologies are accepted. Typical rulings requesting a comment withdrawal (and apology) in the two Parliaments are as follows (refer to 3.1.4.3 for formulae used in the two Houses):

Madam SPEAKER: *Would the member please withdraw and apologise* (New Zealand Hansard, Question 04, 19.03.2008).

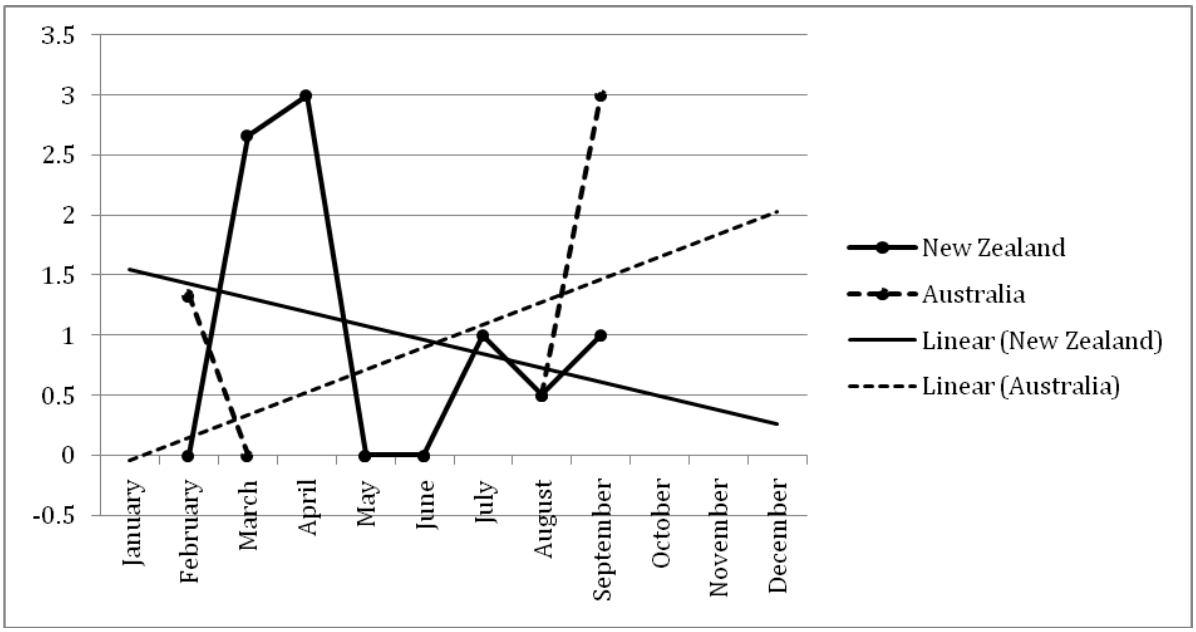
Mr. SPEAKER: *The Manager of Opposition Business will withdraw that statement* (Australian Hansard, Question 12, 28.02.2007).

The data in Table 33 and Graph 10 show that, in the Australian Parliament, the number of the Speaker's requests to withdraw comments was rising during the year whereas in the New Zealand Parliament the general trend was descending. However, it is evident from the Graph 10 that there were periods of increased activity in both Parliaments when, in the course of heated discussions of particular questions, MPs tended to utter more unparliamentary words and expressions than usual. This happened in February and March 2008 in the New Zealand Parliament and was followed by a relatively quiet period from May to September, whereas in the Australian Parliament the peak of activity was in September 2007, thus setting the upward tendency.

	New Zealand Parliament (average number of utterances per month, 2008)	**Australian Parliament (average number of utterances per month, 2007)**
January		
February	0	1.333333
March	2.666667	0
April	3	
May	0	0
June	0	0

July	1	
August	0.5	0.5
September	1	3
October		
November		
December		

Table 33: The average number of the Speakers' requests to withdraw comments per month in the Australian and New Zealand Parliaments.



Graph 10: The frequency of occurrences of the Speakers' requests to withdraw comments in the New Zealand and Australian Parliaments and general trends of their use towards the end of pre-election years.

3.3.3. Warning MPs

A warning is given to MPs when they have been repeatedly breaching rules in the House. Once again, the nature of the Speakers' warnings is different in the Australian and New Zealand Parliaments.

In the Australian House the Speaker gave an offender a warning without waiting for them to breach the rules again always using the same short and effective formula:

Australia:

(79) The NP **is warned.**

Diagram 28: The formula structure and frequencies of occurrence of *"The NP is warned"* in the Australian House of Representatives.

In the New Zealand Parliament the Speaker did not give any official warnings to MPs in the 2008. In fact, Hon. Margaret Wilson's warnings were not given to a particular person but were addressed to all the Members in the House, e.g.:

> **Madam SPEAKER:** *Some members are given to raising points of order that are demonstrably not points or order but points of debate. <u>I warn members to desist from</u>*

that, because it does create disorder in the House (New Zealand Hansard, Question 02, 02.07.2008).

Those few warnings that were referred to MPs sounded like requests rather than warnings and were not followed by any actions from the Speaker, e.g.:

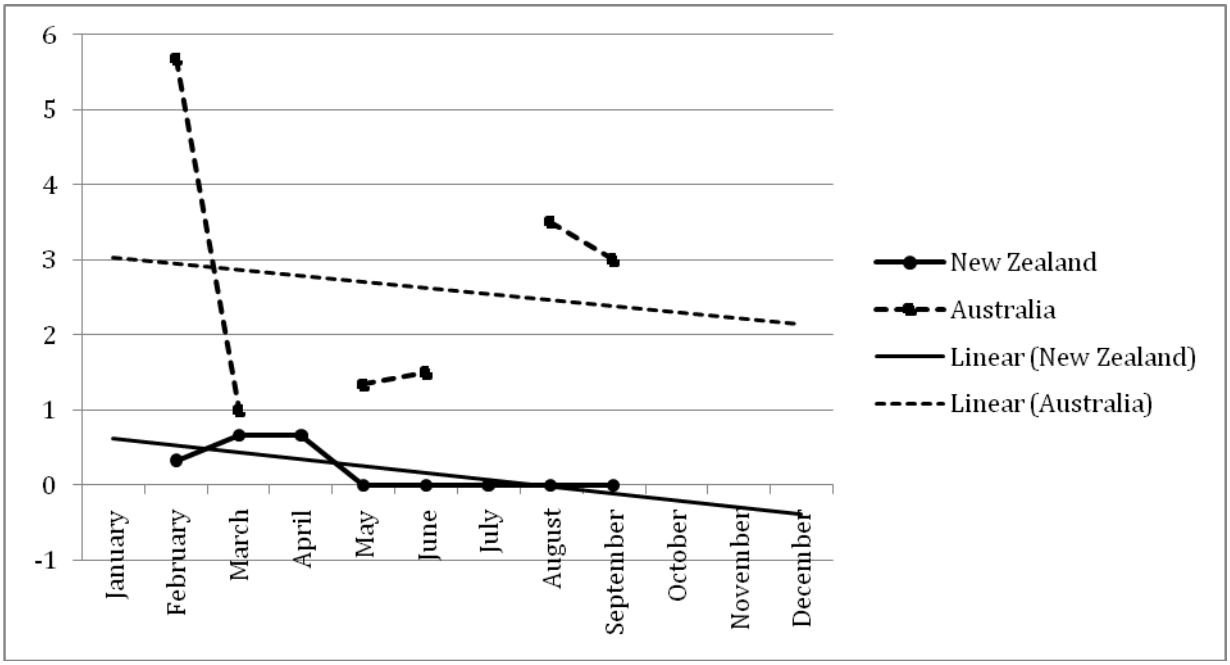
Madam SPEAKER: *I am sorry, but the member has been warned before not to give speeches in the guise of questions. I would ask that in future the member Mr. Mark ask his question succinctly* (New Zealand Hansard, Question 05, 16.04.2008).

Table 34 and Graph 11 show that the Australian Speaker used warnings 14.8 times more often than the New Zealand Speaker (89 times in 2007 in the Australian Parliament as compared to only 6 warnings in 2008 in the New Zealand Parliament). One can observe downward trends of warnings use in both Parliaments. All six warnings were given during the first three months in the New Zealand Parliament whereas in the Australian Parliaments the number of warnings tended to go up and down depending on the topic discussed in the Chamber.

	New Zealand Parliament (average number of utterances per month, 2008)	**Australian Parliament (average number of utterances per month, 2007)**
January		
February	0.333333	5.666667

March	0.666667	1
April	0.666667	
May	0	1.333333
June	0	1.5
July	0	
August	0	3.5
September	0	3
October		
November		
December		

Table 34: The average number of the Speakers' warnings per month in the Australian and New Zealand Parliaments.



Graph 11: The frequency of occurrences of the Speakers' warnings in the New Zealand and Australian Parliaments and general trends of their use towards the end of pre-election years.

3.3.4. Directions for MPs to leave the Chamber

Directions for MPs to leave the House would usually be uttered by the Australian Speaker as a consequence of previous warnings. Once a Member was warned by the Speaker, they invariably had to leave the Chamber if they were still disorderly, e.g.:

> Ms King interjecting—
>
> **The SPEAKER**—*Order! The member for Ballarat is warned!*
>
> **Mr. ABBOTT**—*to have six teeth extracted and then eight months to have dentures supplied.*
>
> Ms King interjecting—
>
> **The SPEAKER**—*Order! <u>The member for Ballarat will remove herself from the chamber under standing order 94(a).</u>*
>
> Mr. Cameron Thompson interjecting—
>
> **The SPEAKER**—*The member for Blair is warned too!* (Australian Hansard, Question 12, 14.02.2007).

Thus the formulae used by the Australian Speaker to rule on such situation are as follows:

(13) The NP **will remove** *himself(8)/herself(5)* [from the chamber(2)] **under standing order # …**

Diagram 29: The formula structure and frequencies of occurrence of *"The NP will remove himself/herself from the chamber under standing order…"* in the Australian House of Representatives.

The following formula used by the Australian Speaker has a similar effect: an offending Member removes himself / herself from the Chamber. However, the procedure is initiated not by the Speaker but by one of MPs:

(2) MP: **I move: That the member for** NP **be suspended from the service of the House.**

Mr. SPEAKER: **The honourable member for** NP **is suspended from the service of the House for 24 hours under standing order 94(b)**.

Diagram 30: The formula structure and frequencies of occurrence of *"The NP is suspended from the service of the House under standing order…"* in the Australian House of Representatives.

In the New Zealand Parliament, however, the situation was different. Hon. Margaret Wilson almost never used this device for bringing MPs back to order. In fact, there was only one occurrence of a Member leaving the Chamber in 2008 in the New Zealand Parliament, and again it was worded as a polite request by Hon. Margaret Wilson rather than a Speaker's ruling:

Madam SPEAKER: *It is impossible to hear. Members say "Answer the question." We will hear the answer in silence so that we can all hear the answer. [Interruption] The member will leave the Chamber if he interrupts when the question is being answered.*

Dr. MICHAEL CULLEN: *Because Mr. Key has argued that gross debt should be lifted to 25 percent of GDP, with an increase long term of borrowing costs of $700 million a year*—**[Interruption]**—*and he has yet to mention any major item of spending, other than tax cuts, to explain the need for an increase in borrowing.*

Madam SPEAKER: *I am sorry, Mr. English, but you heard me explicitly say that courtesy would be shown—that the answer would be heard in silence so that all could hear it. You deliberately interrupted when the Minister was speaking. I am very sorry to say it, but I gave my ruling* (New Zealand Hansard, Question 07, 12.03.2008).

Other formulae used by the New Zealand Speaker to warn MPs that they will have to leave the House if they continue misbehaving include:

(4) Members will be asked to leave the House(2)/the Chamber(2).

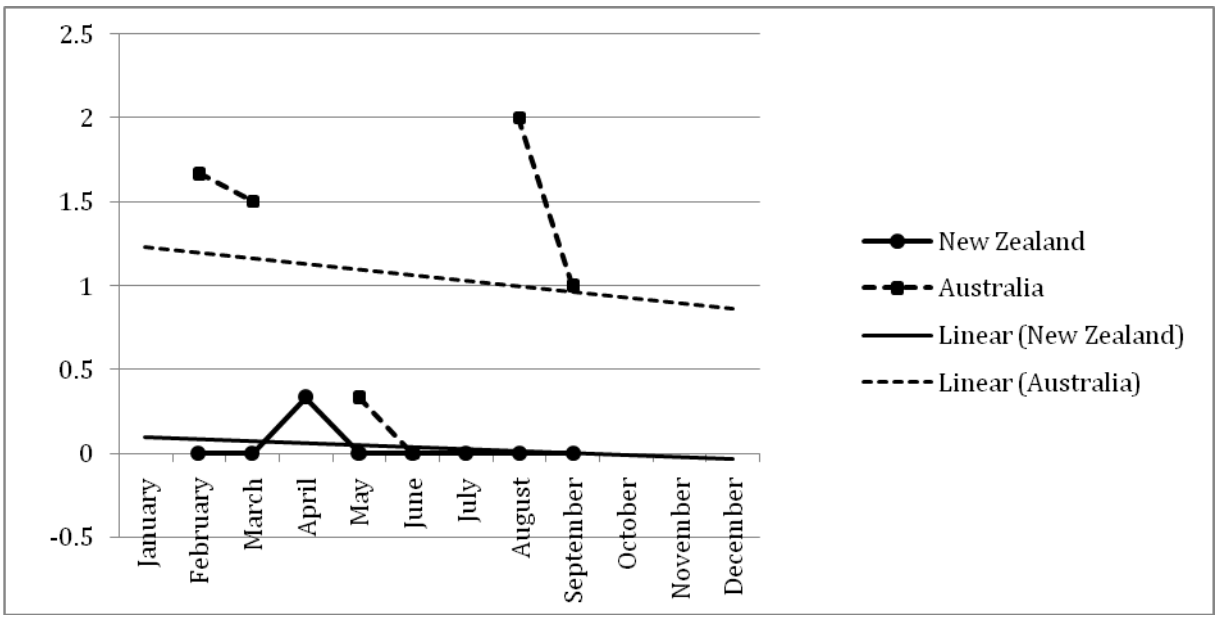
(4) I will be asking

(2)/I will ask(2) **the member to leave the House.**

Diagram 31: The formula structure and frequencies of occurrence of *"Members will be asked to leave the House / I will ask the member to leave the House"* in the New Zealand House of Representatives.

	New Zealand Parliament (average number of utterances per month, 2008)	Australian Parliament (average number of utterances per month, 2007)
January		
February	0	1.666667
March	0.333333	1.5
April	0	
May	0	0.333333
June	0	0
July	0	
August	0	2
September	0	1
October		
November		
December		

Table 35: The average number of the Speakers' directions for MPs to leave the Chamber per month in the Australian and New Zealand Parliaments.



Graph 12: The frequency of occurrences of the Speakers' directions for MPs to leave the Chamber in the New Zealand and Australian Parliaments and general trends of their use towards the end of pre-election years.

Although the chart above shows a downward trend for the New Zealand Parliament, it is hardly possible to talk about one because of the lack of data. With the Australian Parliament, however, one can observe the declining tendency as there were 13 instances of Members leaving the Chamber. The decline in the number of instances towards the end of the pre-election year could be a result of the fact that with debates becoming more heated (as most charts above show) the political parties could not afford losing their most active and able debaters who are usually the Members ejected from the Chamber.

3.3.5. Other disciplinary formulae

This section contains a number of other disciplinary expressions which the Australian Speaker often used in his daily work. They could be referred to his idiolectal vocabulary because Standing Orders do to specifically prescribe a Speaker to use them. However, their relatively high frequencies of occurrence in Hon. David Hawker's rulings and lack of alternative means for expressing similar ideas indicate them as being part of his idiolect. All the formulae below are set with minimum of variables.

No PLIs from the New Zealand Speaker were located for this section. This fact again emphasizes the differences in the two Speaker's ruling style. Hon. Margaret Wilson simply did not need more lexical means to discipline the

House because she tolerated MPs' disorderly behaviour unless it was outrageously disorderly.

(6) The level of interjections(5)/noise(1) **is far too high.**

Diagram 32: The formula structure and frequencies of occurrence of *"The level of interjections/noise is far too high"* in the Australian House of Representatives.

(4) Members [on both sides(2)/on my right(1)] **are holding up their own Question Time.**

Diagram 33: The formula structure and frequencies of occurrence of *"Members are holding up their own Question Time"* in the Australian House of Representatives.

(4) The member(3)/he(1) **will not reflect on the Chair.**

Diagram 34: The formula structure and frequencies of occurrence of *"The Member will not reflect on the Chair"* in the Australian House of Representatives.

(6) The member for NP(1)/he(5) **will come straight to** his point of order(2)/question(2)/it(2).

Diagram 35: The formula structure and frequencies of occurrence of *"The Member will come straight to…"* in the Australian House of Representatives.

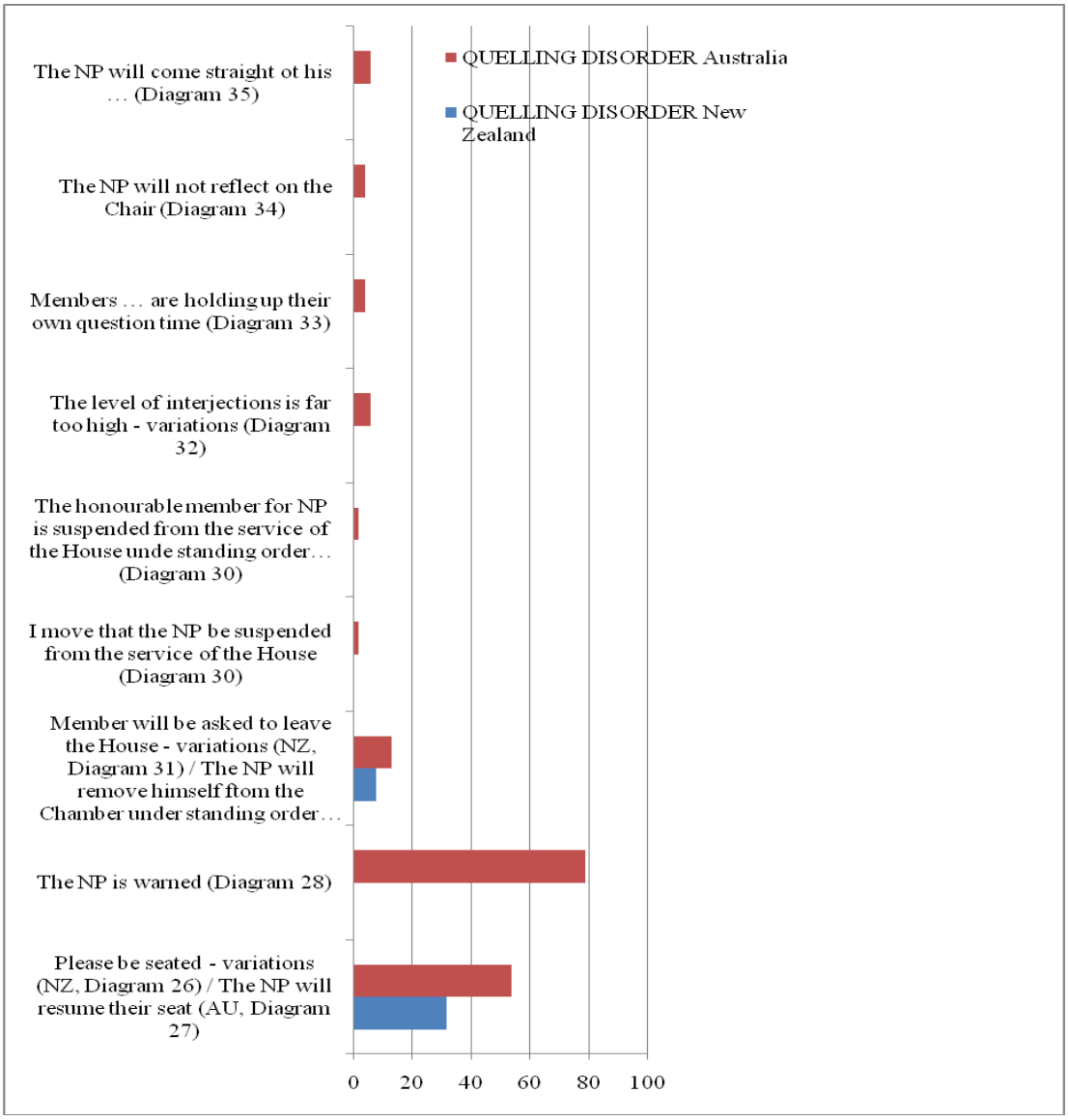
4. Summary of Chapter 7

On the basis of the data presented in section 2, the two leading hypothesis for this research are both corroborated. Both Houses do become more disorderly as the end of year election approaches. As is to be expected, this increase in disorder is not strictly linear but the linear regressions through the data points clearly show the trend to increased disorder as do the rulings of the Speakers.

What is more interesting, perhaps, is how different the conduct of the two Houses appears to be. Obviously the character of the two Speakers is a factor, but it may be that the traditions of the New Zealand House of Representatives are gentler than those of the Australian House, the behaviour of the two Speakers being a reflection of that.

The graphs almost without exception show a steeper increase in disorder in the Australian House than in the New Zealand House and from a higher start point. One might therefore make a case for each House having, as a result of its own history and traditions, a habitus which Members grow into and come to live as Members and Ministers, a habitus which partakes of the same Westminster traditions but has adapted them each in its own way.

This chapter has also illustrated a few formulae used by the Speakers of the New Zealand and Australian parliaments mainly for maintaining order in the Chambers or discipline the offenders. Their genrelectal use is shown on Graph 13. Due to the stricter ruling style of the Australian Speaker there are more formulae from the Australian debating Chamber.



Graph 13: The full list of Speakers' disciplinary and order maintaining formulae, and their genrelectal use in the Australian Federal and New Zealand Parliaments.

Chapter 8: DISCUSSION

1. Introduction

The aim of this work was to conduct research focusing on the ethnographic and linguistic features of Parliamentary Question Time in the Australian Federal and New Zealand Houses of Representatives. The aim of the ethnographic study was to undertake a detailed description of Question Time as a communicative event, focussing on the roles of its participants and standard procedures that the participants took part in in the course of the Question Time sessions. The linguistic section's objective was on the extraction, analysis and comparative description of typical formulaic vocabulary that was an undeniable component of Question Time.

The limitations of the study, findings, its broader implications, and recommendations for future studies will be discussed below.

2. Limitations of the study

The intention to conduct a comparative study of Question Time prior to general elections in the two countries was restricted by the large amount of research material and the limited size of the thesis. I had two options: I could either select a particular topic frequently discussed at Question Time or I could

decrease the amount of research data by means of reducing the number of sessions analysed.

There were two difficulties with the first approach. Firstly, it was hardly possible to find a common topic for the two Parliaments in question. If different topics had been chosen, then the research would probably not have brought up any similarities in the use of formulaic sequences by MPs. Secondly, with a particular topic I would probably have got the topic related vocabulary rather than Question Time related expressions, which was not my intention.

With the second approach I had to decide on how to reduce the amount of data. Yet again, I could have limited the material to two or three consecutive months of parliamentary sittings. In this case, however, I would not have been able to watch the dynamics of disorder development in the two Houses as I did in Chapter 7 of this work.

Thus, a decision was made to choose one sitting day a week in all the sitting months. The choice of Wednesday sessions rather than, for example, Monday or Friday ones, was justified by the idea that MPs' participation in Question Time might be under the influence of various non-parliament related factors. For instance, they might be less active of Friday sessions because they might be too tired and ready to go home. On Mondays, by contrast, some of them might have

needed more time to get back to work after spending a weekend with at home or in their constituencies, etc.

In my opinion, the decision that I made gave this research the following benefits:

- It roughly gave me the same amount of data for analysis (see Chapter 6, Section 2);
- It allowed me to watch the effect of impending elections on the dynamics of disorder development throughout the pre-election year in the two Parliaments (See Chapter 7);
- The diversity of topics discussed allowed me to concentrate on the parliament-related formulae rather than on the topic-related ones (see Chapter 6, Section 2).

Another problem that I had to deal with was the use of Hansard records for PLIs extraction. Not only do the Hansard clerks amend the scripts but they also miss out many of the transitional phrases that are the research material for this study. In addition, MPs are allowed to make amendments to Hansard if they believe it does not report verbatim what they had said.

Rasiah, who also studied parliamentary discourse (2007a: 212), named another drawback of using Hansard: “Hansard transcripts convert spoken discourse into

a written text with all the properties of written language such as the use of punctuation marks, and "the filtering out of 'disfluency' and other properties of spokenness (e.g. intonation, stress). Repetitions […], half-pronounced words, incomplete utterances, (un)filled pauses, false starts, reformulations, 'grammatical slips', etc. are equally absent" (Slembrouck, 1992: 105). Besides that, MPs' body language, gestures, their position with respect to other members are not shown in the transcripts. Goffman (1969: 9) underlines the importance of those by saying: "the very sense of a message depends on our telling whether it is conveyed, for example, seriously, or sarcastically or tentatively, or as an indirect quotation, and in face-to-face communication this "framing" information typically derives from paralinguistic cues such as intonation, facial gestures, and the like – cues that have an expressive, not semantic, character".

All the above-named features were important for conducting the ethnographic part of the research. This problem was solved by using video recordings of the Question Time sessions obtained directly from the Parliaments together with the Hansard transcripts.

3. Discussion

The keystone of this research was Goffman's theory of social enactment based on the idea that every person is an actor and performs multiple social roles. "A

social role […] is an enactment of rights and duties attached to a given status. […] It will involve one or more parts and each of these different parts may be presented by a performer on a series of occasions to the same kinds of audience or to an audiences of the same kind" (1980: 27).Thus, Parliament was treated here as a theatre, and MPs – as its actors. The focus was on the "front of house".

Chapters 4 and 5 looked at various factors that underlie this theory: historic origins, development and changes in the New Zealand and Australian Federal Parliaments, roles of the participants, settings of the two Chambers, disposition of key-players, rules and restrictions. The ethnographic account of all these factors, including the detailed description of Question Time ritual, provides the necessary basis for the linguistic research of the Question Time event.

This research has developed and utilised a new approach to the collection, storage and processing of ethnographic and linguistic empirical material. It was based on the creation of a relational database containing ethnographic data on MPs, which included their personal details (such as age, marital status, number of children, education, etc.), their Parliament-related data, the Hansard transcripts for all the Question Time sessions, video clips of those, MPs' separate utterances, some ethnographic notes that I made while reading Hansard or watching the video clips, etc.

A search tool was developed to satisfy the needs of this particular research in order to conduct the linguistic aspect of the study. It allowed searching the utterance fields of the database for particular linguistic expressions. The statistics on the number of its occurrences in the two Parliaments, including the number of instances from each political party and men/women distribution of the PLI, could be calculated and presented in a form of a spreadsheet with all the real text examples going below the spreadsheet. This approach has proved to be immensely efficient in terms of processing time because it allowed accessing all the results in seconds as compared to, for example, the traditional way of using the catalogue cards.

This utilization of relational database software was not without its problems but it is also clear that it can be extended to other “theatres” where similar data might be interrogated.

The combined ethnographic and linguistic research which was attempted here is not new. Many scholars adopt this approach when studying various communicative events, because it is only possible to understand why particular formulae are used in particular situations by either being a regular participant of the communicative event or a regular observer, i.e. by becoming a participant observer. The understanding of the ethnographic context opens wider horizons

for a researcher because it allows them to see the undercurrent trends as well as the obvious ones, which invariably find their reflection in the language.

The linguistic part of the research was based on the notion of a “discourse community”. It has shown how the Members of the Parliament make up such a community which has common goals, participatory mechanisms, information exchange, community-specific genres, highly specialised terminology and a high general level of expertise (Swales, 1990), and concentrated on the study of the community-specific genre and terminology.

Sixty genre-specific phrasal lexical items, preselected from the purpose-based Parliamentary Question Time corpus with the help of the corpus tool WordSmith, were studied in terms of their regional and/or party genrelectal properties, genderlectal and idiolectal properties. Their structure was analysed to see the possible variations and to compare them.

Below is the schematic representation of the research framework that was developed and used in order to meet the objectives of this study:

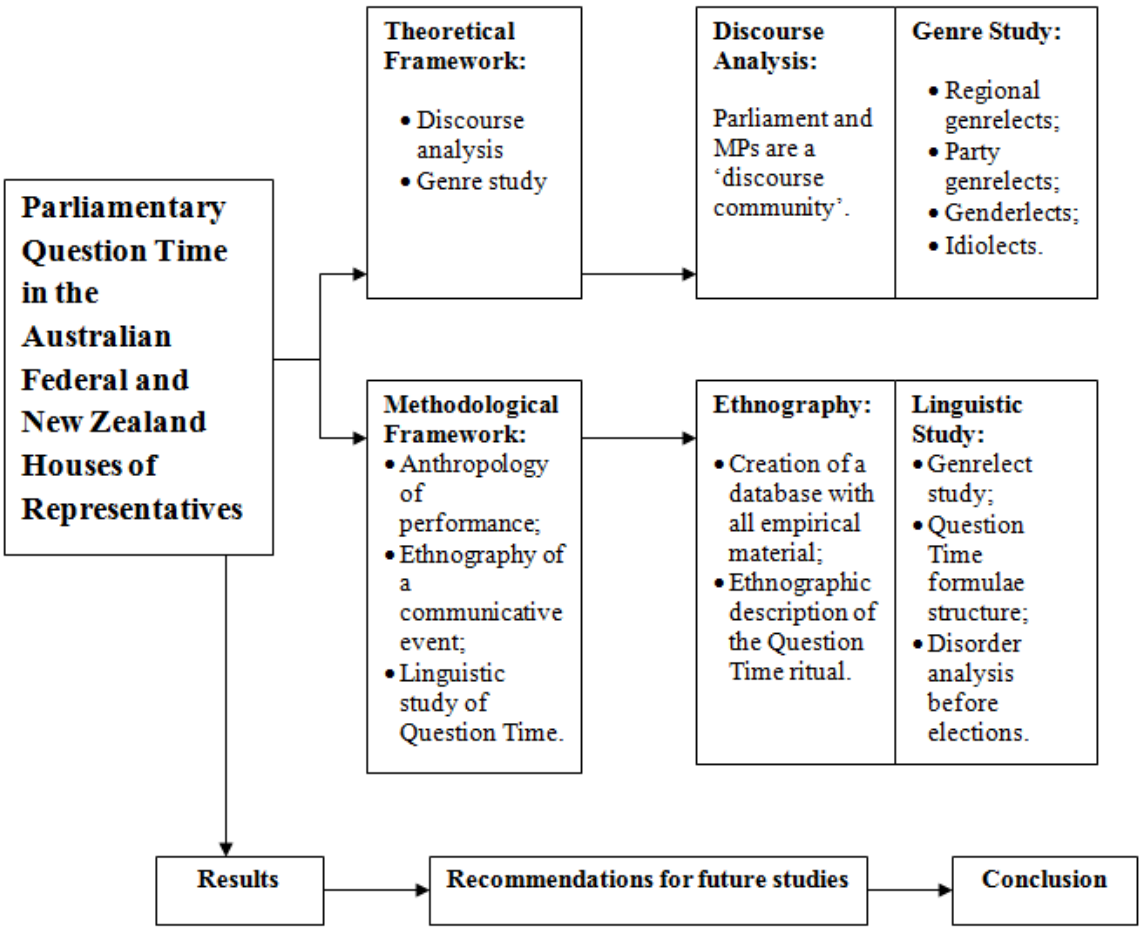


Diagram 36: The research framework.

4. Findings

Some differences in the ways Question Time operates in the Australian Federal and New Zealand Parliaments have been identified. Those include:

1. Procedural differences (as described in Chapters 4 and 5 of this work):
   - duration of Question Time in the two Chambers (New Zealand Parliament – as long as it takes to answer 12 questions, Australian Parliament – till the Prime Minister advises the Chair to stop);

- number of questions asked and answered (New Zealand – 12 question sets including as many supplementary questions as necessary, Australia – the average number of question sets per session is 20.5, including questions to the Speaker, personal explanations and additional answers);
- the way questions are asked and answered (New Zealand – questions are submitted in writing on the day of the Question Time session to undergo the process of checking for compliance with Standing Orders, relevance, etc., Australia – all the questions are spontaneous, no supplementary questions are allowed).

2. Differences in the Speakers' ruling styles (resulting from their personalities, background, education/previous occupation, etc. as discussed in section 1 of Chapter 7):
   - commitment to their party (the New Zealand Speaker tends to be more impartial in her rulings whereas the Australian Speaker openly supports the Government party and ignores the breaches of rules by its Members);
   - ruling styles (the New Zealand Speaker closes her eyes to many breaches of regulations and punishes only when someone raises a point of order to attract her attention to those or when an MP continuously disrupts the work of the House; the Australian Speaker, on the contrary, holds a strict reign of the House and punishes offenders severely even for minor cases of misconduct);

3. Differences in the types of disorderly behaviour during the pre-election period in the two Chambers (as outlined in Chapter 7):
   - number of instances of improper behaviour (New Zealand – more instances because MPs get disciplined by the Speaker on fewer occasions; Australia – more instances, because of the stricter ruling style of the Speaker);
   - offensive comments and insults as "an institution's principles of conduct may often be most clearly revealed through violations and disruptions of normative forms of politeness and through negotiated claims about those violations" (Ilie, 2004: 2). (In New Zealand they are of more institutional character; in Australia – of more personal character).

The analysis of the 60 phrasal lexical items pre-selected from the parliamentary corpus showed genrelectal differences (as per Chapters 6 and 7 of this research):

1. Regional genrelects. One can talk about New Zealand and Australian parliamentary genrelects, because, along with a few similarities, the participants of Question Time in the two Parliaments do use different expressions aimed to perform similar functions);
2. Party genrelects. This study has revealed a number of instances of party-preferential use of PLIs.

3. Genderlects. A few instances of gender-related choice of expressions and a general observation that women are more polite and seldom get involved in insulting or disorderly behaviour has been made.
4. Idiolects. This study has shown that the two Speakers have their own idiolects when ruling in the Parliament. Also a few instances of other MPs' idiolects were noted. The data would also allow a fuller study of individual Members' idiolects. It is clear from the above account that some members in both Houses are much more active during Question Time than others. The personae of "characters" like Gerry Brownlee and Julie Bishop are clear from examples quoting them. However, the restriction of the data under investigation in this study to parliamentary formulae leaves such an investigation for others to pursue.

5. Recommendations for future studies

This study could be viewed as a foundation for more in-depth genre studies of parliamentary discourse. Comparative studies could be carried out on the same topic but either over different time frames or on different parliamentary systems. A comparative study of parliamentary discourse in the New Zealand or Australian Parliaments under different Speakers could also be undertaken. For example, there has been one female Speaker in the UK House of Commons (Betty Boothroyd 1992-2000), and there is a female Speaker currently in the

Australian House of Representatives (Anna Burke 2012-3). This might allow for a study of genrelectal differences as between male and female Speakers.

The research framework that was developed and used for this study appears to be a universal research tool for a wide variety of ethno-linguistic studies. This work has used two types of data as a research material (the Hansard scripts of Parliamentary proceedings and the video footage of those) to ensure consistency. Although Hansard is supposed to be a verbatim transcript of Parliamentary sittings, in fact it does not reflect many important features of the spoken language (as discussed above). The combination of the two media though allows getting a more complete picture. Many formal gatherings, such as various research conferences, court hearings, press-conferences, committee meetings, etc., have their meetings transcribed as well as videoed. These could be used for conducting similar linguistic and ethnographic researches.

6. Conclusion

This study contributes to our understanding in a number of fields. Firstly it contributes to the field of ethnography of communication by providing a detailed comparative description of the Question Time ritual in the New Zealand and Australian Federals Houses of Representatives. Secondly, it developed and utilised a research framework for the comparative genre study

which provided the empirical evidence of the existence of regional genrelects (Australia vs. New Zealand), party genrelects (mostly the Government Party vs. the Opposition), genderlects and idiolects within the genre of Parliamentary Question Time. It also undertook a diachronic study of the use of formulaic language in two different "theatres". To the best of my knowledge, such a study has not been previously undertaken.

As a result of this genre study a list of 60 parliament-related expressions was compiled, their parliament-related distribution, structure and variations in use established and described. Thirdly, the study managed to reveal the influence of a "human factor" on the general atmosphere and work results of a debating forum by showing that, in spite of the existence of strict rules and regulations, it is the personal traits of the Chair and their level of tolerance towards the misconduct that sets the atmosphere of the forum and the boundaries for misbehaviour.

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